GREAT MEN of CANADA

SECOND SERIES

By

JOHN HENDERSON

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GREAT MEN *of* CANADA

GREAT MEN OF CANADA

Life Stories
of a few of Canada's Great Men
told in narrative form

By JOHN HENDERSON
Author of "WEST INDIES," "ROUND THE WORLD," ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE HON. G. HOWARD FERGUSON
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF
THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

[SECOND SERIES]

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE author desires to express his appreciation of the assistance afforded him by many authorities on the histories of the Great Men mentioned in this book, and to acknowledge his indebtedness to a multitude of volumes containing exhaustive biographies of the splendid Canadians lightly sketched herein.

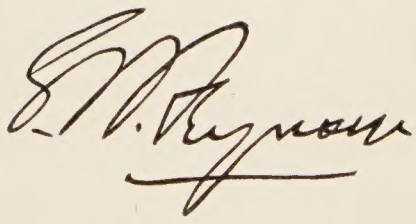
The Archives at Ottawa have been found rich in material, and the officials of the Toronto Public Library the custodians of a wealth of historical knowledge which they distribute with great courtesy and prodigious generosity.

He also desires to put on record his appreciation of the kindly introduction contributed by the Minister of Education, the Hon. G. Howard Ferguson.

1ST EDITION, 1929

PREFACE

THIS second volume of short sketches of eminent Canadians is a continuation of the original plan by which the interest of the young people in the schools is to be stimulated by knowing something of the careers of the eminent men of their country. It should be borne in mind that these sketches, like those of the preceding volume, are but brief biographical outlines and it is not pretended to regard any of the biographies as exhaustive. The author, who has written with so much vivacity and insight, makes this plain, and the hope is that while the outlines of the careers of famous men will prove interesting reading for the younger generation, they should be encouraged to read the longer books which set forth in each case the full achievements of our eminent men. It is widely held, and I believe correctly, that the proper approach to more extended courses in history in the schools is through biography, and for this purpose the present series, which has now reached its second volume, should prove as useful as it is interesting.



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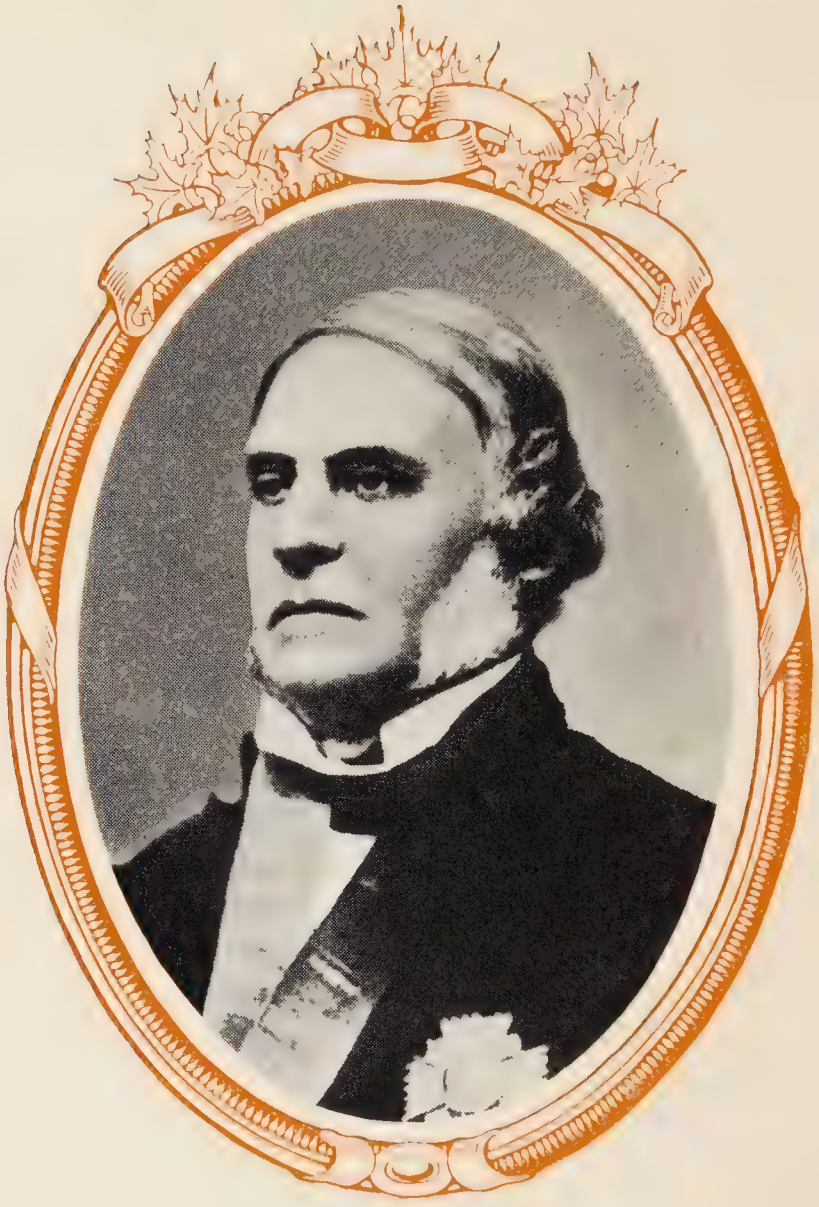


Sir James Douglas

1803-1877

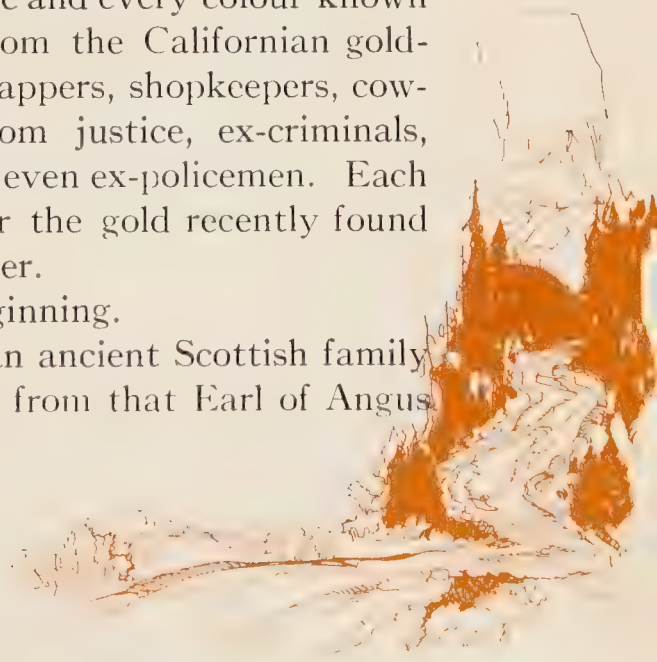
Sir James Douglas

WITH the aid of monies extracted in the form of taxes from fifty thousand reckless, ungovernable, hard-bitten goldminers, Sir James Douglas constructed roads and townships amidst a wilderness, and thus created for Canada the Great Province of British Columbia.

In the romantic history of Canada this adventure stands out as an achievement of great merit, especially so since Douglas accomplished this miracle single-handed. For it is true that in the beginning—the critical hours and days of the beginning—Douglas faced that vast horde of lawless adventurers alone and unsupported. He represented the law of England; the fifty thousand knew no law save that of the bowie knife and the gun. Douglas was a Scotsman who by virtue of over forty years' residence had become a stalwart British American. The fifty thousand were a mixture of men representing every race and every colour known to the world: adventurers from the Californian gold-fields, deserters from ships, trappers, shopkeepers, cow-boys, gamblers, fugitives from justice, ex-criminals, doctors, parsons, soldiers and even ex-policemen. Each and every one was frantic for the gold recently found in the bed of the Fraser River.

But—to begin at the beginning.

James Douglas, scion of an ancient Scottish family which claimed direct descent from that Earl of Angus



Douglas transformed a wilderness into a province

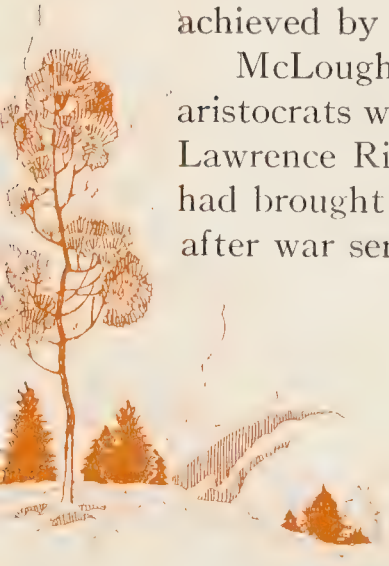
known to history as "Black Douglas," was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, in June, 1803.

James was a boy of studious habits, extremely reserved in temperament and a little unpopular with his fellows by reason of a singularly autocratic manner. He was educated at a private school in Lanark which he left, at the early age of seventeen, to proceed to Canada in search of fortune.

He is described as being, at this period, a tall, well-developed, dark-haired lad, with a swarthy skin and a sombre cast of countenance; by nature he was serious, religious, and credited with ideas and understanding far beyond his years. These characteristics remained with him throughout his life. The weak part of his otherwise fine character seems to have been the lack of a sense of humour. Possibly it was because of this that his manner at times appeared arrogant, and his conduct that of an autocrat.

In Canada young Douglas joined the North-West Company, and reported for service at the headquarters of the Company at Fort William. There he came under the influence of one of the greatest men in the fur trade —John McLoughlin. McLoughlin was in all respects a splendid man who, but for the kindness of his nature and his unselfish regard for "others," would undoubtedly have risen to heights far greater than those achieved by his protégé, Douglas.

McLoughlin was the son and grandson of Scottish aristocrats who had lived in a great mansion on the St. Lawrence River for three generations. The grandsire had brought out a Highland regiment to Canada, and after war service had elected to remain in the country

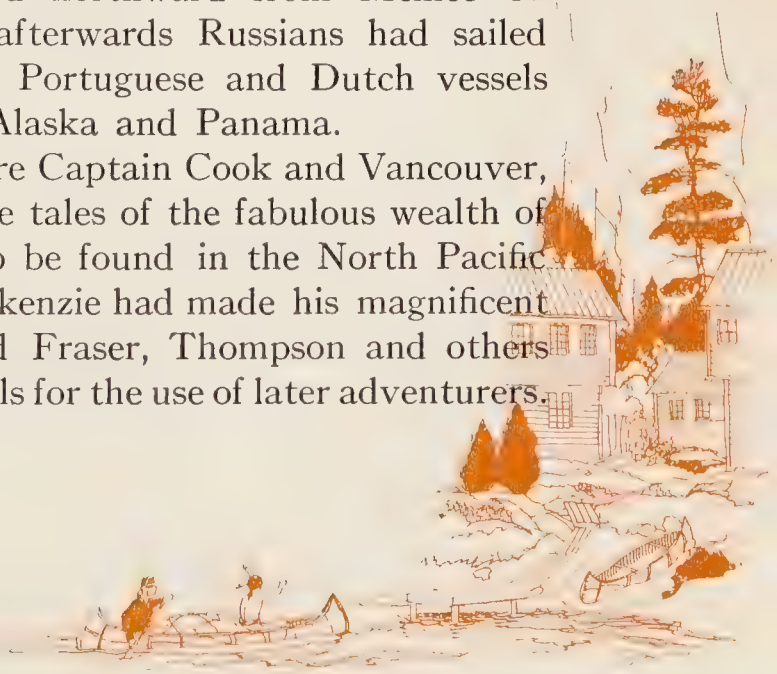


he had learned to love. When Douglas arrived at Fort William, John McLoughlin had already greatly distinguished himself in the service of the North-West Company. He was a man of fine presence and a man possessed of that charm of manner which people sometimes describe as personal magnetism. In education and culture he was infinitely the superior of Douglas, as, of course, at that time he was in knowledge and experience.

When the North-West Company was absorbed by the great Hudson's Bay Company, McLoughlin was appointed by his new employers to take charge of the territories lying west of the Rocky Mountains. In those days the Hudson's Bay Company were generous in the estimate of their own powers; so that by "territories lying west of the Rocky Mountains" they indicated all that land on the Pacific Coast stretching from Alaska to Mexico: a district about a thousand miles in length and five hundred in depth.

It was a country of international importance whose shores had been explored by the ships of many nations. First to arrive had been the Spaniards; then in 1579 Francis Drake cruised northward from Mexico on behalf of England; afterwards Russians had sailed along its shores, and Portuguese and Dutch vessels adventured between Alaska and Panama.

Later explorers were Captain Cook and Vancouver, who had confirmed the tales of the fabulous wealth of fur-bearing animals to be found in the North Pacific Seas. Alexander Mackenzie had made his magnificent journey overland, and Fraser, Thompson and others had mapped rough trails for the use of later adventurers.

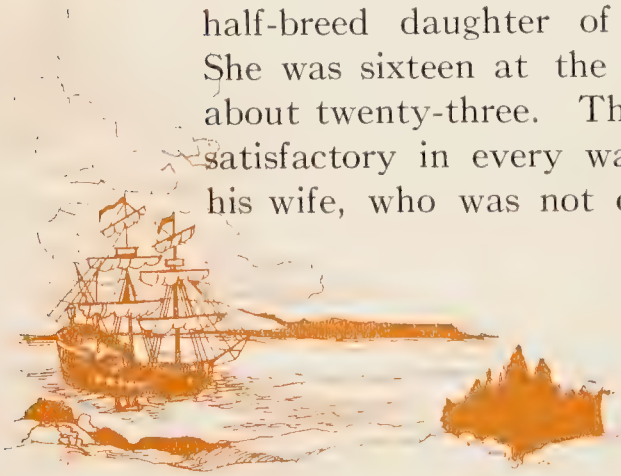


Headquarters of the North-West Company at Fort William

Fraser had left behind, in charge of the newly opened districts, his lieutenant, Stuart, a man of considerable intelligence who had already constructed a number of trading posts on the Pacific slopes. It was McLoughlin's duty to relieve Stuart and certain other officers of the old company. To one of the posts in New Caledonia—the district resting almost in the centre of the country that is now British Columbia—a certain factor named Conolly was appointed, and Douglas became his assistant. These two white men made the long journey across the mountains to this new post accompanied by the wife and half-breed family of the factor, and twenty-four men carrying the usual stores and stock of trade goods.

From time to time the young Scotsman was employed at various trading-posts in various capacities. He worked as an accountant, as the manager of fisheries, trader, transport officer and storekeeper. It is on record that during these years he made the return journey from New Caledonia to Hudson Bay on no less than three occasions.

As a rule the life of the young fur trader on the Pacific coast was a moderately humdrum affair. But there were at least two outstanding incidents in the career of Douglas at this period. The first episode of outstanding interest which befell Douglas during this New Caledonia period was his marriage to the half-breed daughter of the chief factor, Conolly. She was sixteen at the time of the union, and he about twenty-three. The marriage proved eminently satisfactory in every way. Douglas was devoted to his wife, who was not only the grand-daughter of a

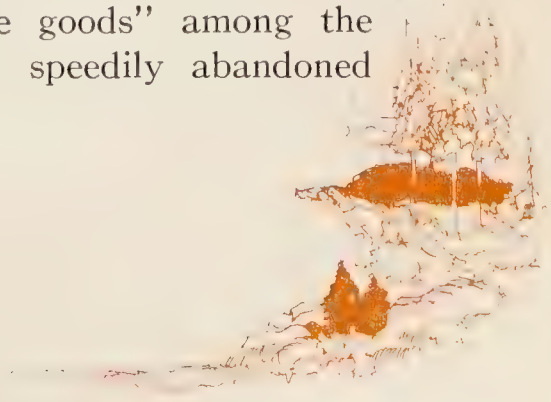


Its shores had been explored by the ships of many nations

famous chief, but one of the most beautiful women in the country. Their eldest daughter in after years married the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Winnipeg.

The second episode was in connection with a murder. A neighbouring factor paid a visit to Conolly, leaving two assistants in charge of his own store. On his return the bodies of these two assistants were found in an outhouse; they had been brutally done to death with axes borrowed from the store for the purpose. It was discovered that the crime had been committed by two Indians, one of whom was easily captured, tried and executed. The second assassin made good his escape and was at large for several months. One day, however, he was tempted by some Indian festival to return to his village. News of his arrival speedily reached the ears of Douglas. Instantly he instituted a search for the culprit, who was eventually discovered hiding beneath a heap of skins. Though menaced by a rifle with which the Indian was armed, Douglas pulled out his man and shot him at sight.

This act caused a great deal of unrest among the tribe. Douglas was not only threatened, he was attacked. By a subterfuge two hundred warriors gained entrance to the fort under pretence of holding a pow-wow; they seized Douglas and got him to the ground, two men trying to throttle him while others held his limbs. He was saved by his wife who, after pleading in vain for mercy, began to throw packages of tobacco and other "trade goods" among the warriors. The would-be killers speedily abandoned



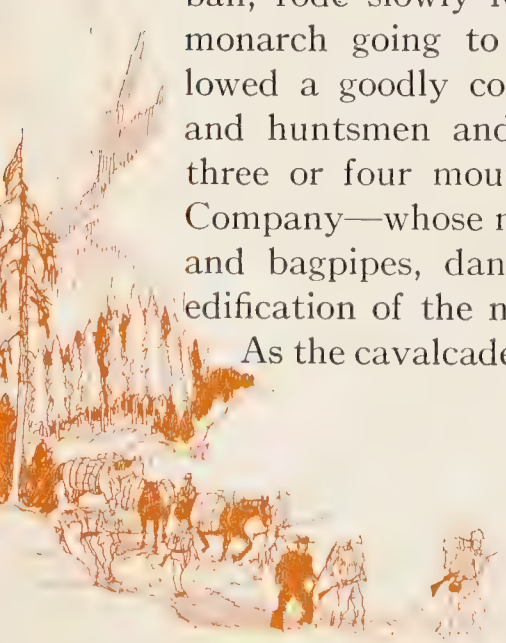
their murderous efforts for the more interesting occupation of scrambling for free tobacco. In the end the band left the post, evidently satisfied that the white man's gifts fully compensated for the death of their comrade.

Shortly after the episode of the Indian outrage, Douglas received orders to proceed to his old chief and friend, McLoughlin, at Fort Vancouver, the headquarters of the Company in the Pacific District. Before leaving New Caledonia he had the pleasure of witnessing the arrival of the big chief of the Hudson's Bay Company, Sir George Simpson, who arrived at Fort St. James on a tour of inspection.

A description of the arrival of this great man is not uninteresting. In considering the ceremony one should remember that much of the theatrical display used by Simpson on these occasions was intended merely to impress the Indians with the importance of the Company and its high officials.

Mounted on horseback and preceded by a gorgeously bedecked guide carrying the H.B.C. flag, and by a band of buglers and bagpipers, Sir George Simpson, costumed in the manner of a glittering knight at a fancy dress ball, rode slowly forward in the stately fashion of a monarch going to his coronation. Behind him followed a goodly company of gaily dressed voyageurs and huntsmen and personal attendants; then came three or four mounted men—superior officers of the Company—whose mounts, unaccustomed to the bugles and bagpipes, danced along prettily enough, to the edification of the naked Indians.

As the cavalcade approached the fort the band burst



The journey across the mountains

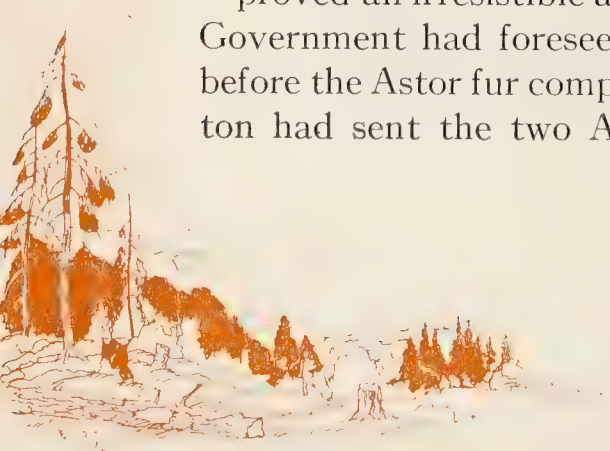
into music, and the resident factor replied with a volley of musketry and the firing of cannon. All the occupants of the fort then came forward and welcomed the chief; the procession was then reformed, and paraded into the fort through deep ranks of awed and delighted savages. It all sounds grotesque—but it assisted in protecting the lives of white men living among untamed savages in lonely places. And after all Simpson in all his glory never attained the theatrical altitudes of, say Buckingham when, as an ambassador from the Court of St. James, he visited the King of France.

James Douglas went to Fort Vancouver and joined his chief and mentor, John McLoughlin. The old fort was nowhere near the site of the City of Vancouver of to-day. When it commanded the Pacific trade of the Hudson's Bay Company, the old fort rested on sloping ground, ninety miles inland, on the north bank of the Columbia River. Traders and trappers, red and white, radiated from it southward to the border of New Mexico, northward to Alaska, eastward to the summit of the Rockies, and westward to the sea, where, occasionally ships anchored and traded in skins brought from remote places.

Here McLoughlin ruled, as a king rules in Africa, with absolute power. His word was law—the only law. The Indian tribes feared and obeyed and loved him, for he was a just man, and, withal, a merry one. His half-breed servants adored him, as dogs adore their masters, for he was a man courteous and generous. All served him, willingly.

To this ruler, as his chief assistant and Lieutenant, came James Douglas; James Douglas, little more than

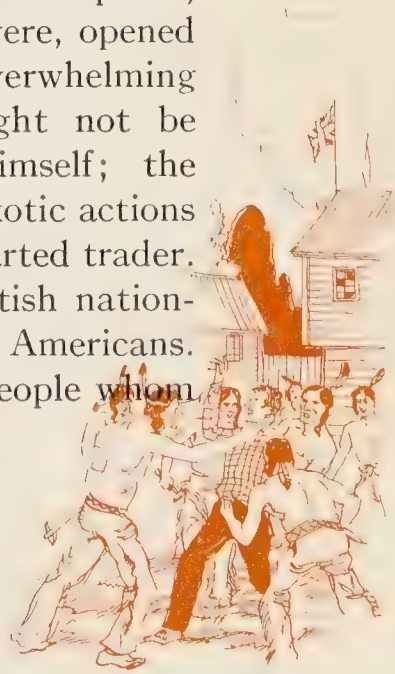
a youth in age, but rapidly becoming old in experience. The only friction which existed in that vast domain was of a political nature. An American fur company, financed for the most part by Astor of New York, had failed commercially where McLoughlin was already earning vast profits. Washington was uneasy at the presence of a British company in territory the Americans already regarded as their own; Russian ships were making frequent voyages from the far north to Panama, nosing in the ports and spying out the land, and American settlers were crossing the ranges and settling in the territory we now call California. McLoughlin didn't care so much for this post in the California district since, alone amongst his vast domain, it was a district which had never paid; therefore he willingly sold out, hauled down his flag, and departed northward to the territory which is now Oregon. Here he had plantations and cultivated farms; he had herds of cattle, sheep and hogs; and the produce from this rich district made his entire territories independent of outside food supplies. The American invasion of Oregon began with the arrival of two lonely traders, whose lives and property McLoughlin saved from Indian attack. He allowed these men to remain, and the result was that others of their race arrived; first in groups, then in hundreds, and then in thousands. The rich lands of Oregon—a No-Man's Country where vast tracts of land could be acquired without payment—proved an irresistible attraction. The United States Government had foreseen the possibility of this years before the Astor fur company failed. Indeed, Washington had sent the two American explorers, Clark and



Lewis, by the overland route to the mouth of the Columbia River where these intrepid men had planted their flag and claimed the land and the river for their country. President Grant claimed Oregon and the land on both banks of the Columbia as American territory, and in regard to this claim letters were exchanged with London. It was a protracted controversy which ended in the British boundary being removed to a position some distance to the north of the Columbia.

The new border was settled in 1846, the British frontier being moved back to the 49th parallel, except in the case of Vancouver Island, to any part of which the United States abandoned all claim.

With the beginning of the influx of American citizens into Oregon, the rule of McLoughlin ended. He was dismissed from his post in disgrace. It was the opinion of the Company that he could have prevented the great invasion, and it is possible that had he been less humane he might have done so. He could have allowed the first comers to die by failing to go to their assistance. The first several parties might have perished of hunger, or by Indian attack, had not McLoughlin gone to their assistance—at his own risk and expense, and to his own undoing. He had, as it were, opened the door of his fortress to an enemy of overwhelming strength in order that that enemy might not be destroyed. In doing so he destroyed himself; the Company had no sympathy with such quixotic actions and they summarily dismissed the kind-hearted trader. In disgust McLoughlin cast away his British nationality and settled among the newly arrived Americans. But here new tragedy awaited him; the people whom



Douglas was attacked by the Indians

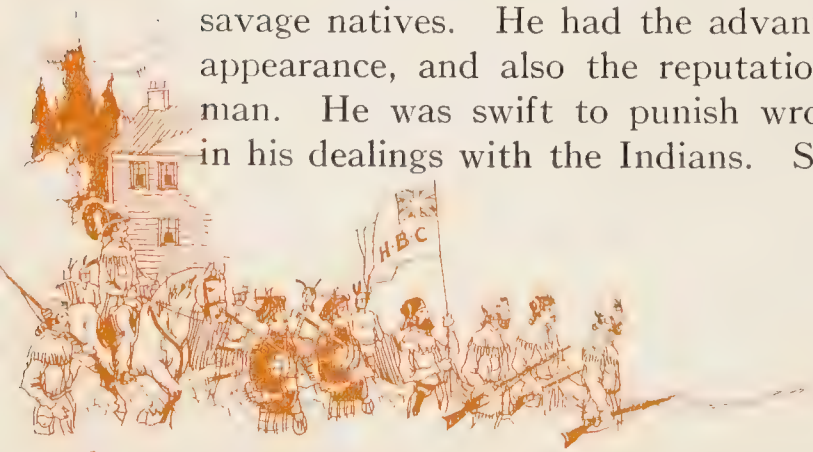
he had befriended, saved to his own undoing, turned from him and offered him nothing but hatred. He died in exile, a brave and kindly gentleman, and a broken man.

James Douglas was appointed in McLoughlin's stead, but even if he had been capable, it was now too late to create a new situation and save Oregon for the British. Instead, anticipating the removal of old Fort Vancouver, he looked round for a suitable situation on which to build a new trading centre. His decision in this matter was a momentous one. He selected Vancouver Island.

Whatever the result of the protracted political negotiations in regard to Oregon and the new British frontier, Douglas realized that the vast influx of settlers meant the inevitable destruction of the fur trade throughout those districts of the mainland. Fur-bearing animals are shy creatures and disappear when man encroaches on their privacy.

On March 1st, 1843, Douglas, accompanied by a little force of fifteen men, set out from Fort Vancouver and sailed for the island. They reached a point of land so deep in clover that it was christened Clover Point. Here they disembarked and proceeded a short distance inland to a native village known as Camosun. The Songhees regarded the little party with great astonishment, but without any appearance of hostility.

Douglas had a natural genius in the handling of the savage natives. He had the advantage of a splendid appearance, and also the reputation of being a just man. He was swift to punish wrongdoing, but fair in his dealings with the Indians. So that though the



Sir George Simpson arriving at Fort St. James

Songhees had never seen Douglas before, it is more than probable that they knew him by repute.

Within an hour or two Douglas had enlisted the aid of the tribe at Camosun, and, under the direction of his own men, a great fort was in process of construction—a fort destined to become Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia.

In April Douglas sailed away to the northward, to dismantle two forts whose trading had proved unsatisfactory; he proposed to augment the staff at Camosun with the men released from these posts.

By June the new settlement boasted a population of fifty men, and before winter set in, the fort had been finished. This structure was of noble dimensions. The main buildings and offices were encircled by a stockade one hundred and fifty feet square and eighteen feet in height. At each of the four corners strong bastions had been constructed, each thirty feet in height and armed with nine pounders.

The fort had been built in an open glade surrounded by oak trees; this space had been cleared of bush and scrub in order to provide a bare space across which no hostile native could approach under cover.

All these elaborate precautions were taken in order to safeguard the settlement from attack; the Indians of the district were reputed to be war-like, savage and unruly. But after a few pow-wows with Douglas and a demonstration of the power of the nine pounders, the native population became subdued, and in fact they never gave trouble.

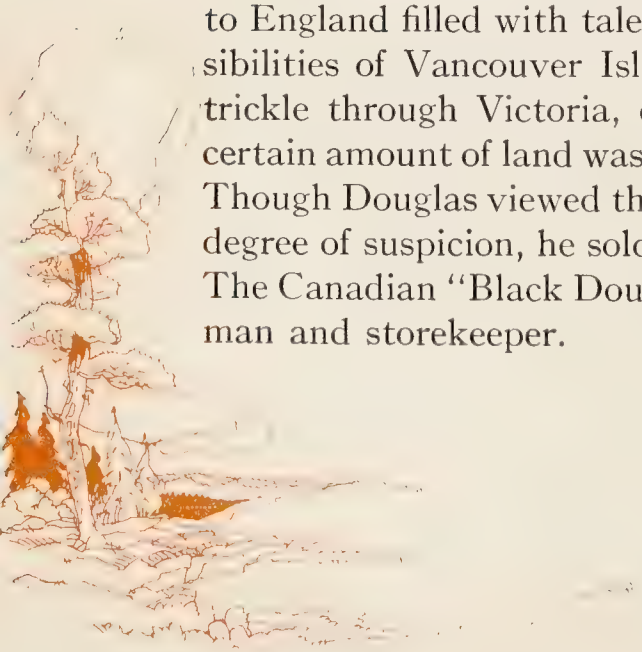
In the late fall of '43 Douglas returned to the mainland to inspect his stations, and to take part in the

arguments regarding the everlasting Oregon-Columbia River boundary question. Thus, for a period, he was occupied, more or less fruitlessly. The Colonial Office at that period was merely a civil service department; England knew nothing of the Pacific slopes of Canada, or the wealth of the waters which ebb and flow against the shores of that splendid western coastline.

Within a year or two a few buildings and warehouses had begun to appear around the old fort, and ships began to arrive from England with a certain degree of regularity. The old Indian name had been abandoned, and, after a very brief period of existence under the name of Albert, the settlement became Victoria, and Victoria it has remained ever since.

Two or three of the Company's ships visited Victoria every year, and an occasional frigate dropped in to give the crew a spell of shore exercise; also, for a period, American whalers used to anchor off the new settlement for supplies. The place became a thriving and prosperous trading centre. Douglas made it his own headquarters, and so it became the most important centre of the Hudson's Bay Company's activities west of the Rocky Mountains.

Attracted by the reports of mariners who returned to England filled with tales of the beauty and rich possibilities of Vancouver Island, a few settlers began to trickle through Victoria, en route to the interior. A certain amount of land was broken for farming purposes. Though Douglas viewed these newcomers with a certain degree of suspicion, he sold them land and trade goods. The Canadian "Black Douglas" was ever a good tradesman and storekeeper.

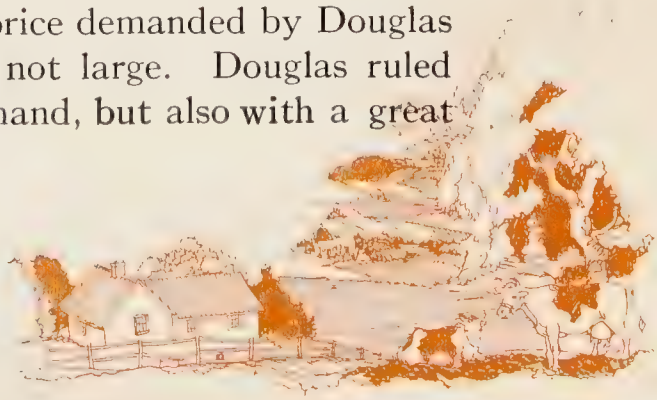


By 1849 Vancouver Island was officially recognized as a British Crown Colony, and the great coal mines at Nanaimo were discovered.

But, even the coal mines of Vancouver Island did not have so vast an influence on the fortunes of Victoria as did the discovery of gold in California during the same year. The rush of '48-'49 to the western American state is now a matter of history. Its effect upon Victoria at first sight seems remarkable; but the reason is easily found in the fact that, apart from San Francisco itself, the only place in the northern Pacific where the vast horde of miners could get outfitted—even in the matter of food—was Victoria. The San Francisco stores charged fabulous prices for everything. The shopkeepers made more money than successful miners; even with such rich profits for the storekeepers, the demand for almost every commodity exceeded the supply. So that Victoria soon found her central fort and group of trim buildings, surrounded by a town of timber houses, most remarkable to look upon; there appeared also, most strangely constructed saloons, gambling houses, and all the undesirable appurtenances of a mining town; but the Hudson's Bay Company did a wonderful trade.

One can imagine that all this development, remunerative but frightful, troubled Douglas as much as it pleased him. Naturally there soon appeared a certain amount of lawlessness.

The settlers in the interior increased in numbers, though, owing to the high price demanded by Douglas for land, the increase was not large. Douglas ruled the country with a strong hand, but also with a great

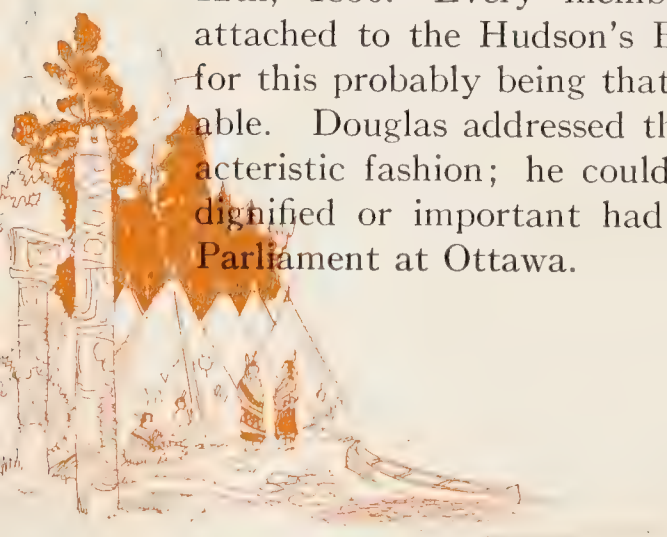


McLoughlin cultivated farms in the country which is now Oregon

regard for what he considered the rights of the great trading company. The settlers complained; they sent complaints to the British Colonial Office; and at last Parliament sent out a Governor. This official, Richard Blanchard, arrived on the Island in 1850. He was an immediate and lasting failure so far as Vancouver Island is concerned. He had no power to counteract the vast power of the Company, and no strength to meet the strength and experience of Douglas. For some eighteen months he struggled along in possibly the most humiliating situation that any British Government official ever occupied. And then, in September, 1851, he left the Island and James Douglas was appointed in his stead. No other man could have been offered, or could have accepted, the appointment.

For five years he ruled as an absolute despot; he maintained a council of advisors, but this council consisted merely of three or four of his henchmen. The authorities in England were becoming increasingly anxious that a properly elected representative assembly should be formed, and in 1856 the despot began to create his Parliament. He divided the Island into four electoral districts, which provided for the election of seven members.

The first meeting of the Legislature was on August 12th, 1856. Every member was in some manner attached to the Hudson's Bay Company—the reason for this probably being that no other men were available. Douglas addressed the seven members in characteristic fashion; he could not have appeared more dignified or important had be been speaking in the Parliament at Ottawa.



The Indian village of Camosun

One or two of the sentences of his Speech from the Throne are worth remembering:

"Self-supporting," he said, "and defraying all the expenses of its own Government, it (the Island) presents a strong contrast to every other colony in the British Empire; and like the pines of its storm-beaten promontories, it has acquired a slow but hardy growth."

A few years before this election of 1856, a report of the discovery of gold on Queen Charlotte Islands had somewhat alarmed the Black Douglas. He pointed out to London that this would probably mean the introduction into the district of a multitude of lawless men. As a result of this, his Governorship of the Island of Vancouver was supplemented by his acceptance in 1852 of the appointment as Lieutenant-Governor of the Queen Charlotte Islands "to meet the circumstances of the time."

However, this "find" in the Charlotte Islands proved to be a small affair; and apart from the fact that he issued a few mining licenses at ten shillings each, the threatened difficulty with the "multitude" of miners in the Island had not eventuated for the Governor. Nevertheless, he had not yet experienced in full the effect gold discovery was destined to have on his character and fortune. In a more or less desultory fashion, the precious metal had been discovered on the mainland for several years. The quantities, however, had not been sufficiently great to attract universal attention. Since there was no Government, or Government official, in British Columbia at that time, Douglas took a sort of paternal interest in all the early diggings, by issuing mining licenses from his office at Victoria.

This action, making it almost necessary that the prospectors should call at the Island on their way to the mainland, no doubt had a beneficial effect on the trading store Douglas still controlled.

By 1857 indications of trouble on the mainland began to reach the official ear. The Indians, asserting that the activities of the miners prevented the salmon from swarming in the rivers, began to protest violently; they claimed that all the gold in their country was their own private property, and they accused the miners of theft of this gold. Then, in 1858, the great rush began. The adventurers of the world began to swarm in the districts of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers. California was nearly emptied of miners who rushed to the new fields; men deserted from ships, others came overland from the Canadian provinces, and by the coast line from Mexico and the United States. It was a tremendous rush, and it found British Columbia without law or Government.

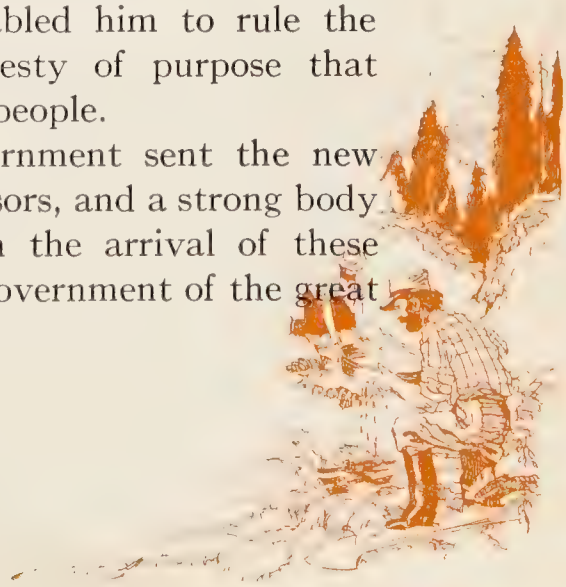
James Douglas took hold of the situation in a splendid manner. On the strength of being the senior Government official near to the place of gold and unrest, he took charge. He found that foreign miners had formed themselves into cliques and groups and had already issued proclamations and adopted certain laws. These little communities actually preserved a certain semblance of order, though their authority was maintained by the quickly drawn gun.

This action of the foreigners filled Douglas with tremendous apprehension. He remembered how Oregon had been lost by a similar invasion, and immediately advised London of his fears. He even advised

that no foreigner should be permitted to possess mining rights or land of any description. This suggestion was naturally rejected; but the effect of Douglas' anxiety was excellent. Britain began to awaken to the importance of her possessions on the Pacific coast—the new discoveries of gold probably had some effect. London immediately revoked, by payment and arrangements, the wide monopolies so long enjoyed by the Hudson's Bay Company on the lands west of the Rockies; and they offered Douglas the appointment of Governor of the Colony of British Columbia, to run in conjunction with his position in regard to the Island of Vancouver. They also offered to provide him with a proper staff, certain details of troops, and all the authority and assistance demanded by his new position. The condition was that he should sever all connection with Hudson's Bay and its allied companies. This appointment Douglas "joyfully accepted"—though it was probably a difficult action for him to sever connection with the old Company after a connection of so many years.

Douglas now set to work putting the new province in order. He pacified the Indians and gained the confidence, respect and obedience of the tens of thousands of miners. He was a born leader of men; probably it was his fine presence that enabled him to rule the natives, and his absolute honesty of purpose that served so well with the white people.

True to promise, the Government sent the new Governor several very able advisors, and a strong body of the Royal Engineers. With the arrival of these officials and troops, the lonely government of the great



Panning for gold on the Fraser River

Scotsman came to end. He had grasped and held a position of great danger and difficulty, and he had done it well. As the Colonial Secretary of that day wrote—"I cannot conclude without a cordial expression of my sympathy in the difficulties you have encountered, and of my sense of the ability, the readiness of resource, the wise and manly temper of conciliation which you have so signally displayed . . ."

After this the life of Douglas was strenuous, but more in accordance with the every day life of a Governor of a pioneer country. He arranged his assemblies and appointed his officers. Roads were built, cities constructed and immigrants of a stable, agricultural type, encouraged to settle on the rich land of the province. British Columbia eventually became a great Province; a part of the Dominion of Canada, joined to the other provinces, and to the western ocean, by the steel lines of a transcontinental railway.

The chief architect of all this greatness was Douglas. In 1863 he was knighted by Queen Victoria, and in the same year he resigned his high office and returned to private life. For three years he was in Europe where he travelled the continent, and for a time lived in his beloved Scotland. Afterwards he returned to Victoria where, in the year 1877, he died suddenly of heart failure.

Sir James Douglas was a Great Man, and a Great Canadian. His austere character did not bring to him the warm affection of a great number of people; but his supreme honesty, and the justice of his government, produced for him the profound respect of all who had cause to work with or for him.

Robert Baldwin

Robert Baldwin

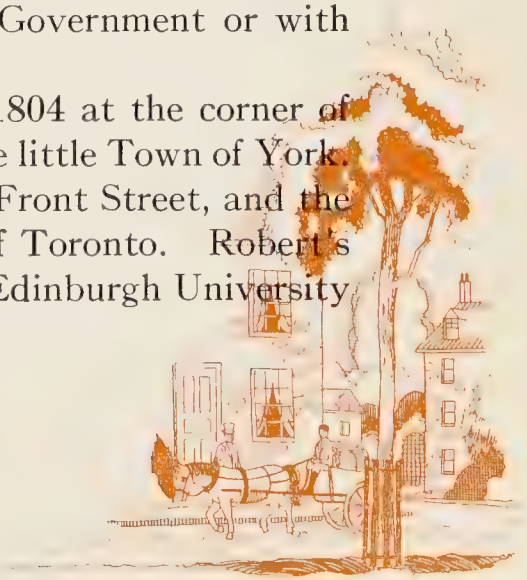
1804-1858

Robert Baldwin

Robert Baldwin will remain in the history of Canada as the champion who fought the great battle for the establishment of responsible government. His political career to a large extent is a record of that titanic struggle, and the victory which crowned his stupendous endeavour represents the sole reward he expected or received for a life given to the service of his country.

He fought against fearful odds: odds represented not merely by the established system of colonial government which had become a part of the constitution of England, but also by the hostility of the most powerful people in the Canadas, the financial and commercial magnates, as well as the office seekers, and a great mass of timorous people who saw in his patriotic ambition disloyalty to the Throne, or revolution, which would result in destruction or annexation by the United States. In addition to this the fact that it was widely believed—falsely—that he had acted with William Lyon Mackenzie in the rising of 1837 did not increase his reputation with the English Government or with the people of Canada.

Robert Baldwin was born in 1804 at the corner of Frederick and Palace Streets in the little Town of York. Palace Street was later re-named Front Street, and the Town of York became the City of Toronto. Robert's father, an Irishman, educated at Edinburgh University,



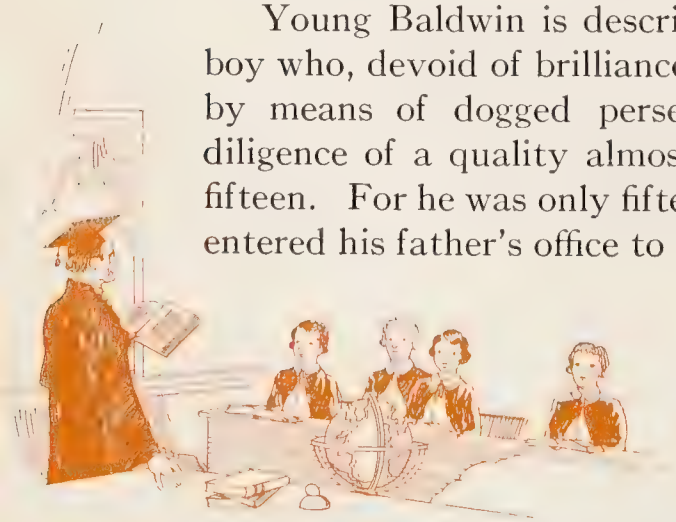
Baldwin was born in Palace Street, now Front Street, Toronto

as a medical man, had come to Canada from County Cork in 1798. He practised his calling in York and found that his patients were few and far between, and his income insignificant. So he opened a school for "sons of the gentry," where boys could receive a classical education for eight guineas per annum. In addition to this fee each scholar had to find one guinea entrance fee, and produce one cord of wood at the beginning of each term.

Although Dr. Baldwin secured a number of pupils —some of whom subsequently became famous men— the school failed to satisfy his ambition or the needs of his pocket. He sought new fields, and found the law. In those days it was not difficult for a man of education to convince the Chief Justice that he was a man fit to practise in the courts, so we find the doctor-schoolmaster a qualified legal practitioner in 1803. To celebrate the event he married a Miss Phœbe Willcocks, and in the following year, 1804, Robert Baldwin was born.

The boy had a rather meagre school education. He attended the Home District Grammar School under Doctor Strachan, who afterwards became Bishop of Toronto. Judging by his later history it is probable that Strachan was a just but exacting schoolmaster, with severe ideas in regard to discipline.

Young Baldwin is described as an undistinguished boy who, devoid of brilliance, became top of the school by means of dogged perseverance and unremitting diligence of a quality almost unnatural in a youth of fifteen. For he was only fifteen when he left school and entered his father's office to study law. In 1825, when



By dogged perseverance Baldwin became top boy

he was twenty-one, he qualified as a barrister, and his father took him into partnership, the name of the firm being altered to W. W. Baldwin & Son.

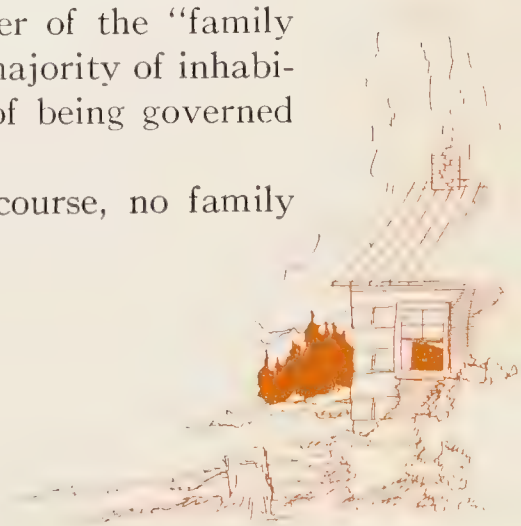
Meanwhile the elder Baldwin had become not merely a prosperous lawyer, but also, by reason of an unexpected legacy, a man of large private means.

The Doctor invested a portion of this legacy in the purchase of a tract of land at the summit of a hill overlooking Toronto; this place he called Spadina; and the wide road subsequently constructed from the estate to the city was called Spadina Avenue.

The wealth which had fallen so unexpectedly into the hands of the doctor-schoolmaster-lawyer, enabled him to take an interest in politics. It is the ambition of practically all men of Irish blood to become politicians, and so it was that when his father began to take an interest in the affairs of the province, young Robert instinctively followed suit.

Doctor Baldwin was, as is usual with men who come from County Cork, a Liberal and a Reformer; unlike many of his fellow Irishmen he was a Loyalist, strongly attached to the Crown, and firm in his conviction of the necessity of Canada's permanent connection with Britain. These views were entirely shared by young Baldwin who, while fervently desiring a better government for the province, had a profound dislike for measures of violence. Both father and son were out for the destruction of the despotic power of the "family compact;" they, in common with a majority of inhabitants of Upper Canada, were tired of being governed by an unelected oligarchy.

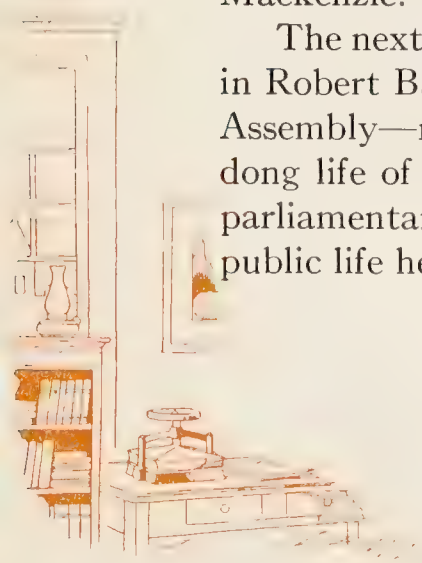
The "family compact" was, of course, no family



affair at all; it was merely a group of seven high officials appointed by the Crown and controlled by the Lieutenant-Governor. This committee, the Executive Council, governed the province. The elected assembly were powerless to pass into law any measure to which the council objected. Also this council, that is to say the Governor, had the right of making all appointments, controlling all expenditures, making grants of land—in fact the council was omnipotent: all powerful.

With plenty of money behind them, the two Baldwins had no need to worry over the affairs of their legal firm, so they plunged into politics. Avoiding the extreme Radical section, they joined the party known as the Moderate Reformers.

Robert unsuccessfully contested the County of York in 1828, but had already risen to a position of prominence in his party. During part of 1829 he was employed by his party in the important task of drawing up a petition to King George IV. in connection with what the Reformers declared an unjust action by the Lieutenant-Governor in regard to the dismissal of a judge who had refused to join the "family compact." In the same year he again contested York and was returned to the Legislature of the Province, largely, it is believed, by the aid and influence of William Lyon Mackenzie.



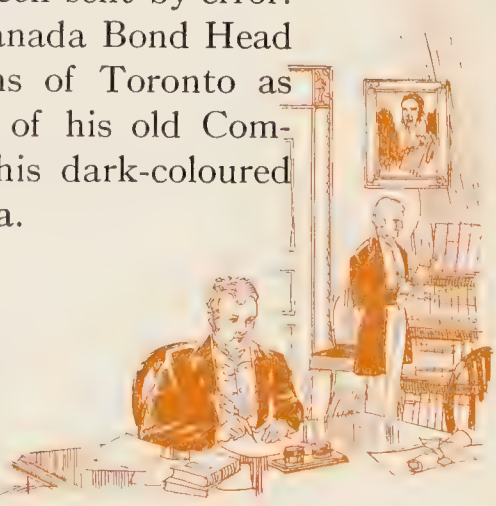
The next few years were comparatively unimportant in Robert Baldwin's career. He was in and out of the Assembly—now elected, now defeated—living the ding-dong life of a politician, and learning the trade of the parliamentarian. From the commencement of his public life he had never ceased advocating "responsible

government." His friends protested that he had become a man with one idea, his enemies declared that he had "a bee in his bonnet." It is certain that they meant by the "one idea" and the lonely bee that system of responsible government to which Baldwin had dedicated his political life.

Meanwhile William Lyon Mackenzie and his more advanced supporters were beginning to make a great noise in the province. Though they demanded little more than that which Baldwin demanded, they sought to gain their objects by different methods. An alarming condition of affairs already existed; there were mutterings of uprisings, of revolutions. Always regarded as an extremist, Mackenzie was now being called by harsher names.

From this section of Reformers Robert Baldwin held sternly aloof; he had no sympathy with violence. But his political position was a difficult one.

In the midst of this tumult a new Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, arrived in Upper Canada. Head was a retired major on half-pay who, since Waterloo, had managed a mining company in South America. It is said, with some possibility of truth, that this man's appointment to Upper Canada was a mistake which had been made by a colonial office clerk in London, England. Another Head—a brilliant young Government official—Sir Edmund Head, had been selected for the appointment; but Bond Head had been sent by error. However that may be, in Upper Canada Bond Head was inclined to treat the politicians of Toronto as though they were unruly members of his old Company on the field of Waterloo, or his dark-coloured mine subordinates in South America.



At 21, Baldwin became a barrister

He made it quite clear soon after his arrival that he had come to the Colony to govern it. The home authorities had instructed him to conciliate the Reform Party, and though it is probable that he didn't quite know what this instruction meant, he proceeded with the work in his own fashion. He decided to increase his Executive Committee by three members of the Reform Party. His choice fell upon Robert Baldwin, a moderate; John Henry Dunn, an independent; and Dr. John Rolph, a member of the Mackenzie party.

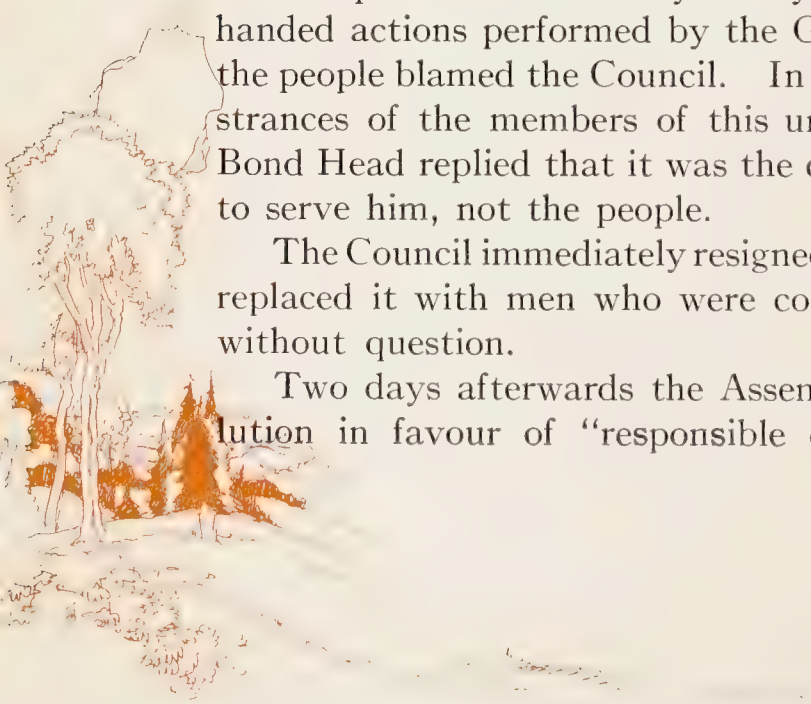
With great reluctance Baldwin and the other Reformers accepted this office. Not unnaturally, they thought that with the privilege of advising the Governor, and being entirely in his confidence, they were a step nearer the long desired goal of responsible government.

Their hopes were soon destroyed; it became evident that they were mere puppets in the hands of an autocrat. Bond Head had no intention of governing according to their advice; he immediately proceeded to make appointments to which the Council objected—and so on.

The province was vastly annoyed at certain high-handed actions performed by the Governor, for which the people blamed the Council. In reply to the remonstrances of the members of this unfortunate Council, Bond Head replied that it was the duty of the Council to serve him, not the people.

The Council immediately resigned, and the Governor replaced it with men who were content to serve him without question.

Two days afterwards the Assembly passed a resolution in favour of "responsible executive council,"



Baldwin purchased a tract of land overlooking Toronto

and declared that they had no confidence in the new members Bond Head had appointed.

Many interesting events eventuated in the Upper Canada House, but we must follow Robert Baldwin, who, immediately after his resignation, proceeded to England to place the position before the Colonial Office.

Unfortunately the Colonial Secretary refused to see him. After his resignation from the Council, Bond Head had written Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, describing Baldwin as a member of the "low bred antagonist democracy, and an agent of the revolutionary party." Unable to see the Secretary, Baldwin wrote a letter to the Government which Professor Leacock in his *Baldwin, Lafontaine and Hincks* describes as one of the most important letters in Canadian history. "He outlined," says Professor Leacock, "in sober loyalty to the Mother Country, conditions in the Colony, and he suggested a remedy as clear-cut as it eventually proved successful. There could be no misinterpretation. Baldwin's recommendations were those of full responsible government over all the internal affairs of the province. Durham never wrote more clearly, and it is not uninteresting in the light of his Report to note that, before it was penned, Baldwin sent Durham a copy of this famous letter to Glenelg. Had the latter been persuaded to give Baldwin a personal interview, the logic of the reasoning might have been driven home. As it was, Baldwin, the most loyal and constructive of the Reformers, remained under the suspicion of being a revolutionary."

Though Baldwin was not the first patriot to be

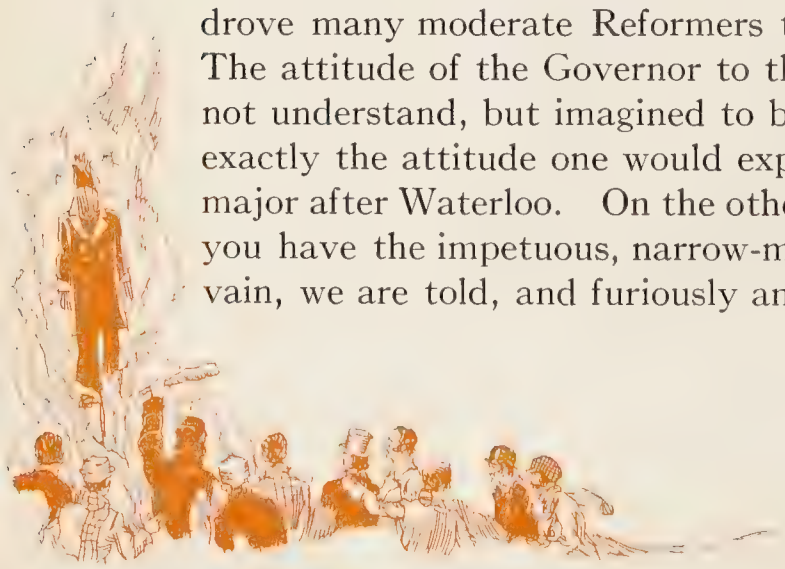
classed in England as a revolutionary, as a rule such errors were made only by timorous monarchs during the mediæval centuries. The British Parliament seldom makes such blunders; but Baldwin, disgusted though he must have been at such scurvy treatment, sailed home again still intent on his mission for the good of the province and for the Empire.

He arrived in Toronto to find that the Reform Party no longer possessed a majority in the House of Assembly. Bond Head had dissolved the House, and, during the election which followed, the Governor's followers had swept the province.

A Constitutional Reform Society of Upper Canada had been formed, and old Dr. William Baldwin had been elected President, with Hincks, a great friend of Robert Baldwin's, as Secretary.

The extremists under William Lyon Mackenzie were beginning to show their teeth in earnest—maddened to desperate thoughts of violence by the continued references by Bond Head to "disloyalty" and "revolution."

It is probable that though Bond Head was gifted with a superior manner, he was also inflicted with an inferior intelligence. His excuse must be that he had no experience in diplomacy or politics, but certainly his remarks on the general disloyalty of the province drove many moderate Reformers to Mackenzie's side. The attitude of the Governor to those whom he could not understand, but imagined to be in the wrong, was exactly the attitude one would expect from a half-pay major after Waterloo. On the other side of the picture you have the impetuous, narrow-minded Scot—a man, vain, we are told, and furiously ambitious. He was a



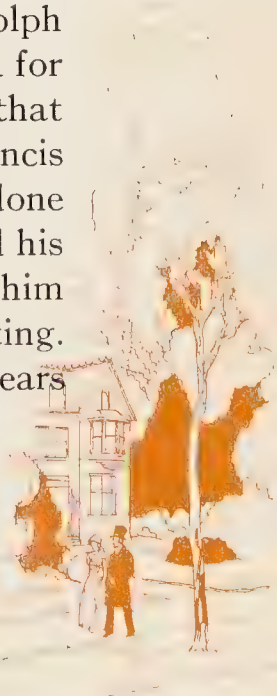
Mackenzie's effigy was burned in Toronto

member of a proud peasantry, historically quick to take offense and to imagine insult. William Lyon Mackenzie had hurled insult after insult at his political opponents—oppressors as he described them—and had received some very hard knocks in return. Not only had his effigy been burned in a public street in Toronto, but the building and machinery of his newspaper office had been destroyed.

Such were the two principals in the witless drama known as the Mackenzie rising which produced nothing but the noise of a shot or two, and one or two hangings. Possibly the event brought the dissatisfaction of the province in a stronger light before the home officials; certainly it sent Mackenzie flying to the United States, a fugitive with a price on his head.

Baldwin took no hand in this uprising, though he was often accused of being associated with William Lyon Mackenzie. As a matter of historical fact he placed himself entirely at the disposal of the Governor—as, in spite of his contempt for the man, it was his duty to do. Bond Head used him to take a message to Mackenzie, then encamped with an armed force on Yonge Street, four or five miles north of Toronto. The Governor instructed Baldwin to accompany Doctor John Rolph and, under a flag of truce, ask the rebels the reason for their appearance under arms. Mackenzie replied that the rebels wanted independence, and if Sir Francis Head wished to communicate with him it must be done in writing. Baldwin rode to Toronto and delivered his message, returning again to Mackenzie to acquaint him of the Governor's refusal to send any message in writing.

It was on the basis of this event that for years



afterwards Baldwin was accused of being a revolutionary.

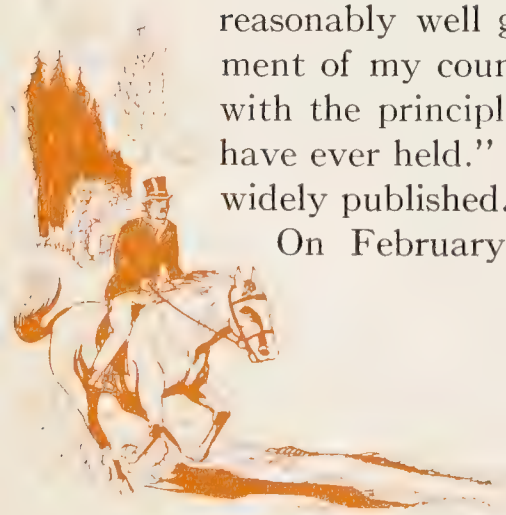
A rebellion somewhat similar to that in Toronto had taken place in Lower Canada; this uprising had proved more serious than the William Lyon Mackenzie fiasco, since there had been considerable bloodshed.

The effect of these two tragic affairs was that the English Government sent out Lord Durham to make a detailed report on the condition of affairs in the Canadas. As is well known, the outcome of this report was the union of the two provinces. In order to effect this union, the British Colonial Office sent a very wily diplomatist to the Canadas. Clever though he was, Lord Sydenham found the utmost difficulty in persuading the leaders of Lower Canada to even consider the project; in Upper Canada it was a little easier, for such proposals seemed to Baldwin to indicate the official recognition of his responsible government policy.

So honest was this Robert Baldwin that, in 1840, when he accepted office at Sydenham's request as Solicitor-General of Upper Canada, without a seat on the Executive Council, he wrote the following letter to Sydenham:

"I distinctly avow that in accepting office I consider myself to have given a public pledge that I have a reasonably well grounded confidence that the government of my country is to be carried on in accordance with the principles of responsible government which I have ever held." This statement he also caused to be widely published.

On February 10th, 1841, the Union came into

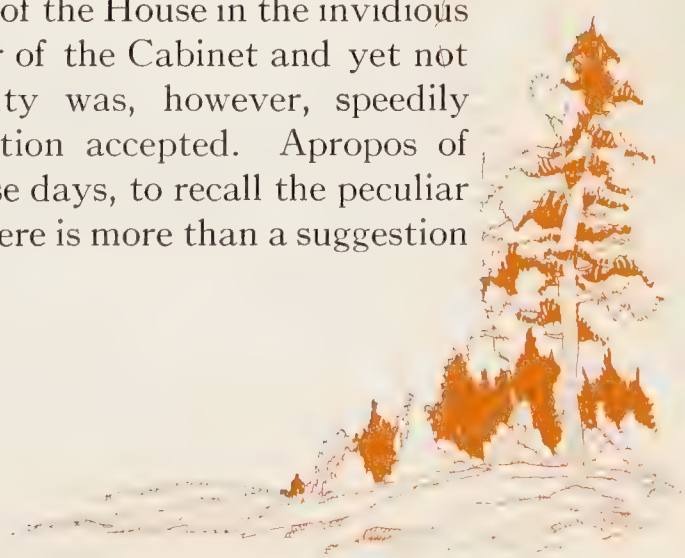


Baldwin delivered his message and returned to Toronto

existence by virtue of a proclamation of the Governor-General. The legislative chambers of the two Canadas were in future to be united: the Lower House, or Assembly, was to consist of eighty-four members elected by the people; and the Upper House, or Legislative Council, of not fewer than twenty persons appointed for life by the Crown.

In the first House of Assembly, which met at Kingston, Ontario, Robert Baldwin was elected in two constituencies. He had already been appointed a member of the Executive Council—Solicitor-General for Upper Canada—by Lord Sydenham. The status of the Executive Council—which was virtually the Cabinet—must not be confused with that of the Legislative Council or Upper House.

Baldwin very much objected to several of his fellow members on this Executive Committee, and, even before the first meeting of the Assembly, acquainted Lord Sydenham with his objections. The Governor found fault with Baldwin's criticisms, and in the end the stubborn Reformer resigned. The Assembly met two days after this resignation had been posted, and it had not been officially accepted when the united parliaments met for the first time. Resignation from the Executive Council did not, of course, entail resignation of his seat in the Assembly, so Baldwin was present at the first meeting of the House in the invidious position of being a member of the Cabinet and yet not a member. This disability was, however, speedily removed, and the resignation accepted. Apropos of this it is interesting, in these days, to recall the peculiar character of Sydenham; there is more than a suggestion

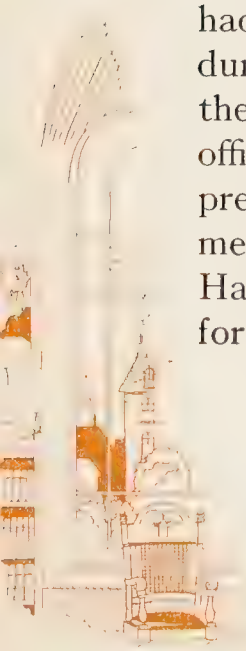


of political chicanery in the fact that while boasting to England that by his own efforts he had "got the large majority of the House ready to support me upon any question that can arise. . . . Except . . . two or three ultra-Radicals who have gone over with my Solicitor-General (Baldwin) whom I have got rid of . . . " He must have forgotten that Baldwin resigned.

At the time this letter was written—June 27th, 1841—the Governor's optimism in regard to the strength of his supporters was justified. In the House, an amendment moved by the Reform Party in favour of responsible government had been rejected by fifty votes to twenty-five.

In September of the same year Baldwin again came to the attack, and presented to the House a series of resolutions affirming the principle of responsible government. Although the Government managed to scrape through without defeat on this resolution, they were forced to substitute an amendment which contained, in rather ambiguous fashion, the main points of Baldwin's resolution.

On the seventeenth of the same month, with dramatic suddenness, Parliament was prorogued. Lord Sydenham had fallen from his horse on the fourth and had been confined to his bed in a very serious condition during the heated debate on Baldwin's resolution. On the nineteenth the Governor died; so that his last official act was the preparation of the terms he was prepared to concede in regard to responsible government. This document, known as the Sydenham-Harrison resolutions, eventually did much to obtain for Canada freedom of government.



However, much water was to flow over Niagara before this freedom was obtained.

The Governor who succeeded Sydenham, Sir Charles Bagot, found himself in a quandary. He was informed that Sydenham's old party could not secure a majority; that the French members represented the power of the House, and that he must have nothing to do with Baldwin, "who had betrayed Sydenham."

After much hectic and futile correspondence with Whitehall, Bagot took matters in his own hands. He sent for the leader of the French party, Lafontaine, and offered him a sufficient number of offices to enable him to claim the leadership of the House. Lafontaine was a member of the Reform Party of Lower Canada, and was just as falsely besmirched with participation in the Lower Canada rebellion as Baldwin was in regard to the Upper Canada affair. After hesitation Lafontaine accepted, on condition that Baldwin was also included in his Cabinet. Even to this Bagot agreed, and so began the famous Lafontaine-Baldwin Government.

In the elections following his appointment, Lafontaine was returned without difficulty. But poor Baldwin was rejected by two Upper Canada constituencies—Hastings and York. Finally he had to accept the Lower Canada seat of Rimouski, but he was too late to re-enter the House that session. The next session passed in the comparative quietude of ordinary parliamentary business, and the new Government was assailed throughout the country for having produced no startling legislation or political fireworks.

Bagot was the recipient of abuse from England and the Canadas; his great effort at compromise seemed

Lafontaine announced the resignation of the Ministry

to be popular nowhere. His health broke under the strain of this strange persecution, and on May 19th, 1843, he died.

Sir Charles Metcalfe assumed office while Sir Charles Bagot was still on his sick bed. The new Governor was of the old type; the type of men who came out to Canada to "govern."

Metcalfe's first official duty concerned the question of appointments. The office to be filled was that of provincial aide-de-camp for Lower Canada—the salary for this post, which was in the nature of a sinecure—had to be met by the House of Assembly. Metcalfe appointed a man to the post in spite of the opposition of the Government. Another case occurred a little later in regard to a bill which, though it had passed through the House with a large majority, failed to secure the Governor's sanction. Irritation always existed between the Government and Metcalfe. Finally the Government refused to continue in office and remain subject to such humiliating conditions, and, on November 27th, Lafontaine stood on the floor of the House and briefly announced that the ministry, with one exception, had resigned office. Two days later Baldwin explained the reason for the resignation; and after a protracted debate, the conduct of the Government was upheld by a vote of forty-six to twenty-three.

For a time the Governor was without a ministry; but eventually he gathered around him a small "provisional" government, and the two Canadas discussed the situation for several months. Metcalfe dissolved Parliament on September 23rd, and writs were issued

Baldwin was accused of being a revolutionary

for a new election. The result was in the nature of a triumph for the Governor, since the Lafontaine party came back in the minority—a small, very small minority. For this victory Metcalfe was created a peer, and henceforth was known as Lord Metcalfe.

The character of the new Parliament, with neither party able to claim a working majority, reduced the House to a condition of inactivity. No group or party could introduce any measure which would provoke controversy.

Meanwhile in 1845 Lord Metcalfe, because of failing health, was recalled to England; he died in the year 1846.

Lord Elgin, who succeeded Metcalfe, arrived at Montreal early in 1847. For months he watched the agony and futility of the various political parties; finally, in December, he dissolved the House and issued writs for a new election during January, 1848. When the new House opened in February of the same year it was discovered that the Reformers had been returned with an immense majority; the Lafontaine-Baldwin Government had once more come into power.

It is impossible in this volume to even mention the names of the useful Bills with which Baldwin's name was associated during that session. The most important one was the presentation by Lafontaine and Baldwin of the Rebellion Losses Bill. This legislative effort was generally denounced as a measure for "rewarding rebels." With its provisions and clauses we have little concern here. No Bill ever created greater opposition in the history of Canada. It was passed by the House; and Lord Elgin, recognizing the

right of the House to legislate on its own concerns, refused to reserve the bill for Royal sanction, or to dissolve Parliament; he passed the measure in accordance with his constitutional duty. The Imperial Government refused to interfere in the matter, and thus was established Canada's right for responsible government.

The result was inconceivably idiotic, even terrible; Lord Elgin was stoned, Baldwin's apartment and Lafontaine's house were wrecked; and the Montreal House of Assembly was burned to the ground.

But it all passed, the turmoil and the strife ended very quickly, and men of the Canadas soon realized the immensity of their gain.

Robert Baldwin remained in politics and in the House a year or two longer, and then returned to private life. He was a tired man, and with the end of the battle, when victory at last was his, he felt the burden of his wounds. In the process of his fight for liberty he had been labelled "rebel," "revolutionary" and other fearful names. Decent men had refused to sit at table with him because they thought him a traitor, and so, unclean. He was very weary, and though but forty-seven years old, he retired. Three years later he was created a Companion of the Bath. John A. Macdonald, who already had become great in Canada, offered to make him Chief Justice of Common Pleas, but this and other offers of offices of honour he declined.

On December 9th, 1858, at his Spadina estate in the City of Toronto, he died, a Great Man, and a Great Canadian; but one who had known little happiness.

Sir Oliver Mowat

Sir Oliver Mowat

1820-1903

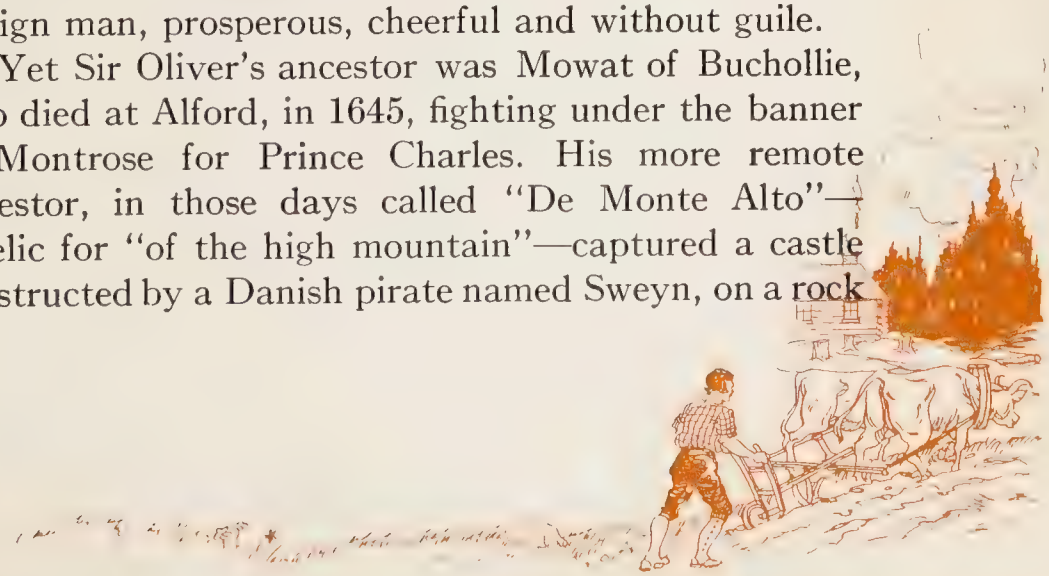
Sir Oliver Mowat

WITH justice it may be said of Sir Oliver Mowat that he was the father of modern Ontario. In the sense that he was the first great man to explore its mighty forests and gaze upon its beautiful lakes, Champlain discovered the province—Champlain and the fur traders and the missionaries; Simcoe brought into being the first Government, and a multitude of splendid pioneers and traders scattered settlements and produced orderliness amidst the savagery of the primeval forests; law makers, politicians, teachers and preachers played their parts in the mighty work of construction; but Oliver Mowat laid the foundations of Ontario as Ontario is today.

He was a man qualified by nature for such a task. His remote ancestors were rulers and fighters; his father was a soldier and a pioneer, and his mother was a woman without fear.

One looks at the picture of Sir Oliver and sees a quiet benevolent looking old gentleman, wearing spectacles and whiskers and carefully brushed hair; a benign man, prosperous, cheerful and without guile.

Yet Sir Oliver's ancestor was Mowat of Buchollie, who died at Alford, in 1645, fighting under the banner of Montrose for Prince Charles. His more remote ancestor, in those days called "De Monte Alto"—Gaelic for "of the high mountain"—captured a castle constructed by a Danish pirate named Sweyn, on a rock



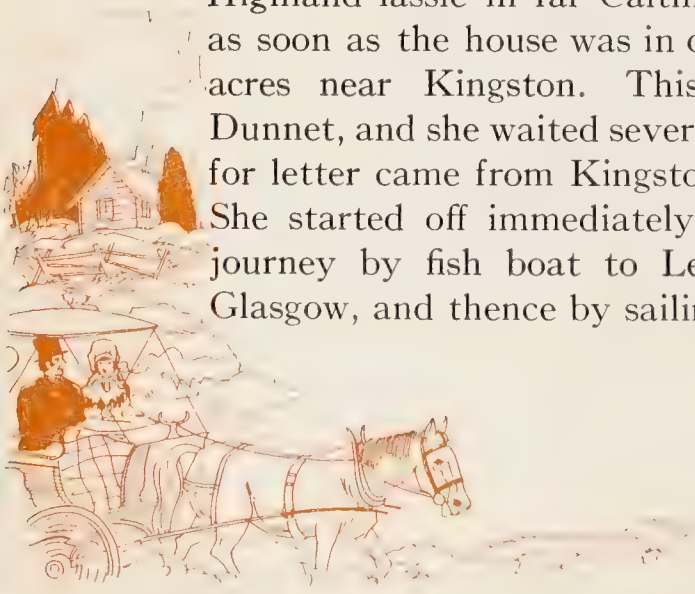
Mowat's father tilled the ground near Kingston

jutting from the extreme north of Scotland. Here the gentle De Monte Alto founded the family. By the time Robert the Bruce ruled the North, the Gaelic of the family name had already been changed to Mowat.

As the centuries fell away and fighting as a profession ceased to pay, the Mowats tilled the ground and became comparatively poor. The land of the north of Scotland is arable only in parts, and few people find those parts. So when, in 1791, the father of Oliver was born, the family lived in comparative obscurity as tenant farmers. John, Oliver's father, destined for the church, preferred the camp, and enlisted in an English regiment, the Buffs. He fought in the Peninsular campaign under Sir John Moore and under Wellington, and rose to the rank of sergeant. After this he came with his battalion to Canada and took part in the actions at Plattsburg. Returning to England the Buffs were ordered to Flanders, but John Mowat had seen enough of war. He retired, time expired, and told the authorities he desired to settle in Canada.

As a gratuity for his services he was given a grant of two hundred acres of land near Kingston.

The Sergeant had left behind him a dark-eyed Highland lassie in far Caithness, pledged to join him as soon as the house was in order on the two hundred acres near Kingston. This was Helen Levack, of Dunnet, and she waited several years before the longed-for letter came from Kingston to her father's cottage. She started off immediately, undaunted by the long journey by fish boat to Leith, and stage coach to Glasgow, and thence by sailing ship to Canada. John

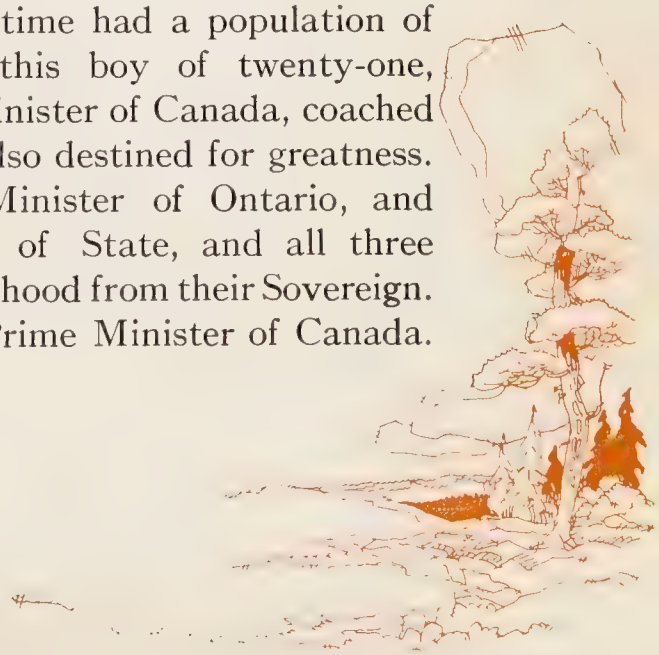


They set out in their own carriage to Kingston

met her at Montreal, they married and set out forthwith in their own carriage to Kingston—a beautiful, dallying, honeymoon journey, made in blossom time along the banks of the St. Lawrence.

Oliver was born in 1820; he was the oldest son of five children. A publication once asked Sir Oliver to write a biographical sketch of his mother; this he declined to do. But he said he would like her name and the date of her birth and death published, together with a motto expressing the idea that, in most cases, a woman has no history apart from that of her husband. The lines he selected were Ruskin's: "The best women are necessarily the most difficult to know. They are recognized chiefly in the happiness of their husbands and in the characters of their children."

Oliver Mowat attended the grammar school at Kingston until he was sixteen years of age, then his father articled him to Mr. John A. Macdonald, a lawyer of that city. John A. Macdonald had just been called to the Bar, and was only about five years older than his first pupil. It may not be amiss here to say that young Macdonald must have had a genius for attracting, or selecting, promising pupils, for, a month or two after Mowat, Alexander Campbell came to him to learn the law. Kingston at that time had a population of about five thousand, yet this boy of twenty-one, destined to become Prime Minister of Canada, coached in his little office two boys also destined for greatness. Mowat became a Prime Minister of Ontario, and Campbell a chief Secretary of State, and all three received the honour of Knighthood from their Sovereign. One died in harness as the Prime Minister of Canada.



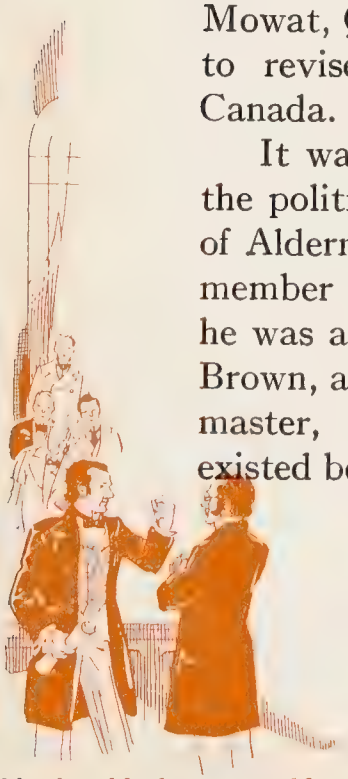
Each of the other two passed away while holding the high office of Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

Mowat left Macdonald's office in Kingston and proceeded to Toronto, where, at Osgoode Hall, he passed his law examination with honours, and was called to the Bar.

In those early days Mowat found little time for recreation. He was a man of a serious and religious temperament: his spare hours were spent in church affairs, and in reading history, biography and theology. He was created a member of the Senate of the University of Toronto, and later Chairman of the Committee of the Senate.

It is probable that it was with the idea of legislating in the direction of the reform of certain existing laws that first attracted Mowat to a political life. For we find him writing John A. Macdonald, then Attorney-General, urging him to bring in bills for the amendment of certain Acts. These suggestions so much impressed John A. Macdonald that, in 1856, when the Taché-Macdonald combination came into power, Oliver Mowat, Q.C., was appointed one of the Commissioners to revise and consolidate the statutes of Upper Canada.

It was during this same year that Mowat entered the political arena. First he was elected to the office of Alderman of the City of Toronto, then he became member of Parliament for South Ontario. In politics he was a strong Liberal, a staunch follower of George Brown, and thus an opponent of his old friend and law-master, John A. Macdonald. The friendship that existed between these two men was of a curious nature.



Macdonald threatens Mowat with physical violence

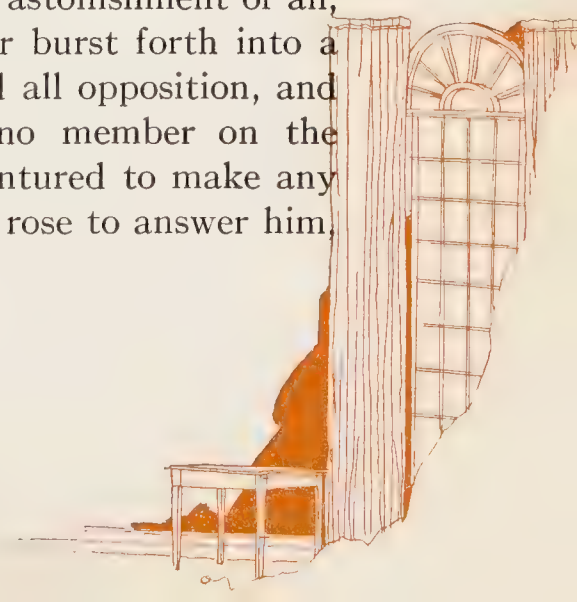
After Mowat's maiden speech in the House, Macdonald wrote him:

"My dear Mowat:

"You made a very good speech, but it would have been more impressive if delivered with more ease. I do not mean ease of enunciation—for you have lots of that—but ease of tone. You speak in too high a key, and strain your voice so that it falls not too pleasantly to the ear. So, as I want you to be the first legal speaker of the Opposition, take my hint as it is meant; don't imitate. . . ."

However John A. "meant" it to be taken, the eminent Chancery Q.C. probably took it with a certain mental reservation, such as: "you wait, my boy."

And now a year or so afterwards we find him in the House taunting the great advice-giver to such an extent that at last it caused Macdonald to cross the floor and threaten to "slap Mowat's chops." In those days remarks such as this were regrettably frequent in the House; today they would not be tolerated. Mowat was no saint when he engaged in the rough and tumble of debate. On one occasion he characterized a statement of an opponent as "utterly false." Amidst a tumult of protest on the part of the opponent's friends, the Speaker promptly called Mowat to order. For a minute or two he paused, and the House sat silent, says the chronicler. Then, to the astonishment of all, the usually unimpassioned speaker burst forth into a stream of invective that paralyzed all opposition, and so captured the situation that no member on the Government side of the House ventured to make any reply. When he sat down no one rose to answer him.



and both his opponent and Mr. Speaker looked as if they had made some serious mistake.

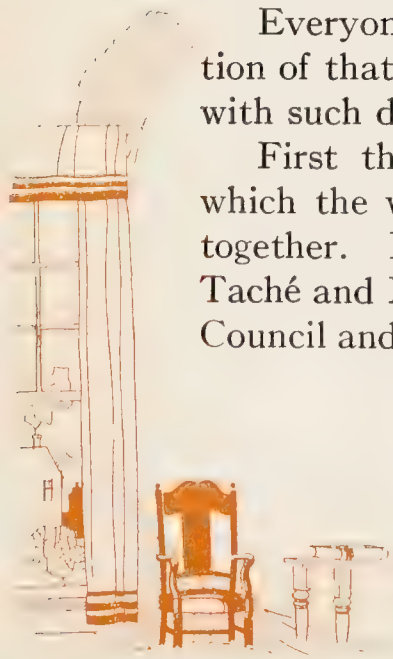
Mowat was one of the victims of that weird political burlesque known as the double-shuffle; in that tragic Brown-Dorion administration which had a non-productive existence of two days, Mowat was sworn in as Provincial Secretary. As a result of this promotion he found himself without a seat in the House, and had the trouble and expense of being re-elected.

It was not until 1863 that Mowat actually attained cabinet rank; in that year he joined the Sandfield Macdonald-Dorion Government which carried on for a short period. Mowat, as Postmaster-General, achieved a notable triumph in reconstructing the ocean mail contract with the Allan Company. He not only obtained a more frequent service, but also secured it at a saving of money for the Government.

The period of political deadlock now set in, and no leader or team of leaders could produce a government capable of sustaining more than an ephemeral existence. Confederation was in the air. It had become obvious that the union of the two Canadas was an impossible arrangement; it must be either separation of those two or the larger union of the Canadas and the Maritimes.

Everyone knows the outcome of the gradual evolution of that great idea which seemed to reach a climax with such dramatic suddenness.

First there was the historic coalition cabinet in which the wolves and the lambs of politics sat down together. In this cabinet, under the leadership of Taché and Macdonald, Brown became President of the Council and Oliver Mowat Postmaster-General; it was



the first time the two lawyers, master and pupil, had found themselves in unity since the old days of the Kingston office.

Then came the Quebec Conference at which the Kingston legal trinity was made complete by the inclusion of Alexander Campbell as one of the Ontario representatives.

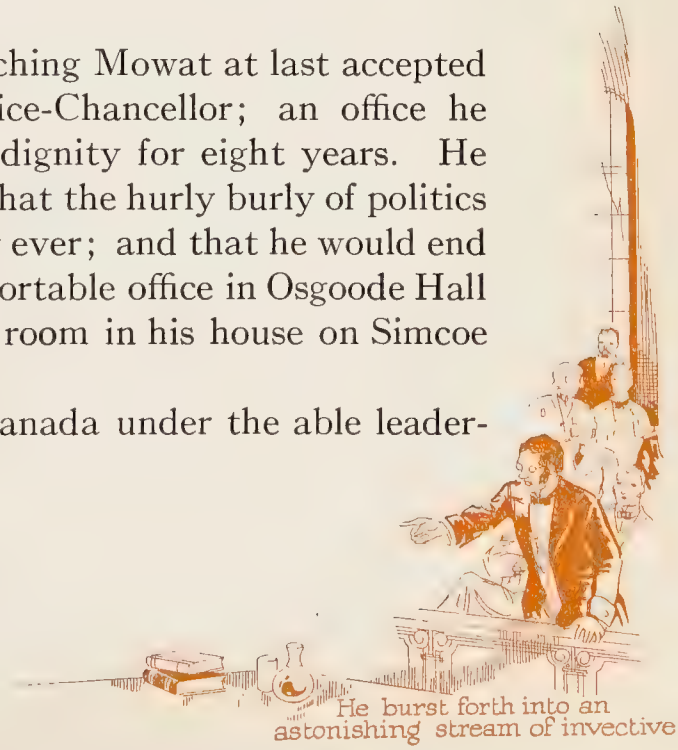
During the Quebec proceedings, Mowat acquitted himself well; he drafted several of the resolutions, especially those relating to the respective powers of the Federal and Provincial Parliaments.

Though he took his place as a member of this momentous conference, Mowat was destined to take no constructive part in the Confederation of the Provinces or in the creation of the Dominion.

The Vice-Chancellor Ester died during the progress of the conference, and Mowat was offered this high office in the Court of Chancery for Upper Canada. Reluctant though he was to lose so able a lieutenant, Brown unselfishly urged Mowat to accept this appointment, as did Macdonald, who no longer desired to inflict corporal punishment upon the person of his old friend.

After much heart searching Mowat at last accepted the offer and became Vice-Chancellor; an office he filled with efficiency and dignity for eight years. He thought, good easy man, that the hurly burly of politics had passed behind him for ever; and that he would end his days between his comfortable office in Osgoode Hall and the snug, book-filled room in his house on Simcoe Street, Toronto.

The Government of Canada under the able leader-



He burst forth into an astonishing stream of invective

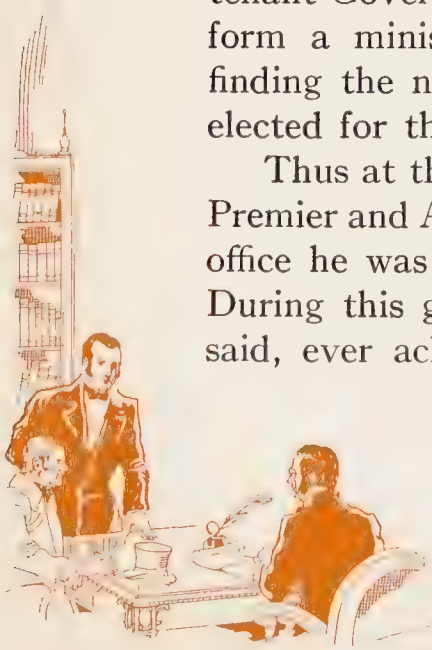
ship of Macdonald sat at Ottawa; and in Toronto, Ontario was being governed in a manner that did not offend a Vice-Chancellor who took no interest in politics.

But suddenly there came a change, a change disturbing to the placid, well ordered life of a learned Judge. One bright October morning in 1872 Mowat's study was invaded by Mr. Blake, the Prime Minister of Ontario, and Mr. George Brown of the *Globe* and Confederation fame.

To Mowat's amazement these two political architects suggested that he should abandon the Bench and become the Liberal Leader of the Ontario Party. They poured out a tale of what they considered dastardly conduct on the part of their political opponents; of broken pledges; insidious intrusion into provincial rights—a long story with which we have no interest here, and of whose accuracy or otherwise we have no knowledge.

But Mowat was impressed, for he agreed to sacrifice the cultured ease of his great position on the Bench, and return once more to the hustings. Immediately, on the advice of the retiring Premier, Blake, the Lieutenant-Governor sent for Mowat and asked him to form a ministry. No difficulty was experienced in finding the new Premier a seat, and he was speedily elected for the North Riding of Oxford.

Thus at the age of fifty-two, Oliver Mowat became Premier and Attorney-General for the Province; a dual office he was destined to hold for twenty-four years. During this great expanse of time—the longest, it is said, ever achieved by a Prime Minister within the



Blake and Brown called on Mowat

Empire—Mowat accomplished much important work for Ontario. His name will stand throughout history as the champion who won for the Province that vast tract of land to the north-west, which Manitoba, backed by the Federal Government, claimed from Ontario. Also, he will be remembered for the fact that he established, beyond the possibility of refutation, that fact that Ontario's land and wood and minerals belong to Ontario and Ontario alone. To obtain a favourable ruling on these two points, Mowat had to do much legal work and spend many hours of pleading before many courts, and finally before the Privy Council. He had arraigned against him the whole force of the Dominion Government, and representatives of powerful vested interests.

It has been suggested that in the earlier days of Confederation certain Federal Leaders determined that the Provincial Parliaments should have the powers of glorified vestries, or municipal councils; that they should be dominated entirely by Ottawa.

If a policy such as this existed, Mowat succeeded in destroying it. He allowed no encroachments on the power of the Provincial Parliament. He even procured for the Provincial Governors the Royal rights of pardoning doomed felons. There is no doubt that the ex-judge made an ideal Premier for that period of elementary construction. He did not attempt to develop, so much as he laid a solid foundation upon which future development might safely be adventured.

His position was something akin to that of a lawyer who creates or corrects the contract of his client before that client commences to build. Mowat as the Prime

Minister watched and guarded the interests of every person or thing contained within those three hundred and sixty-five thousand square miles of territory we call Ontario.

And after twenty-four years Ottawa sought his services again; Laurier wanted him as his Minister of Justice and as Leader of the Senate. He was getting a little tired of fulfilling his exacting duties as Prime Minister of Ontario, so Mowat went to Ottawa and the Senate and became Minister of Justice. At that time he was seventy-six years of age, and he soon wearied of the office of Minister of Justice and the leadership of the Senate.

So they made him Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and in that exalted office he remained until the end came to him.

During his busy life he made several journeys to the Old Country and to Europe. His Sovereign first created him a K.C.M.G. and afterwards promoted him G.C.M.G.

Sir Oliver Mowat died on April 19th, 1903, aged eighty-three. He passed away peacefully in the presence of his family, and his body was buried next to that of his beloved wife at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Toronto.

This man was a Great Man, greatly beloved; and as has been said, he was the father of modern Ontario.

He was born before Canada was born; when our land was but a scattered group of small, unimportant colonies. He lived to see his Canada a great nation; and in the creation of that nation he played a Great Man's part.

Sir John Thompson

Sir John Thompson

1844-1894

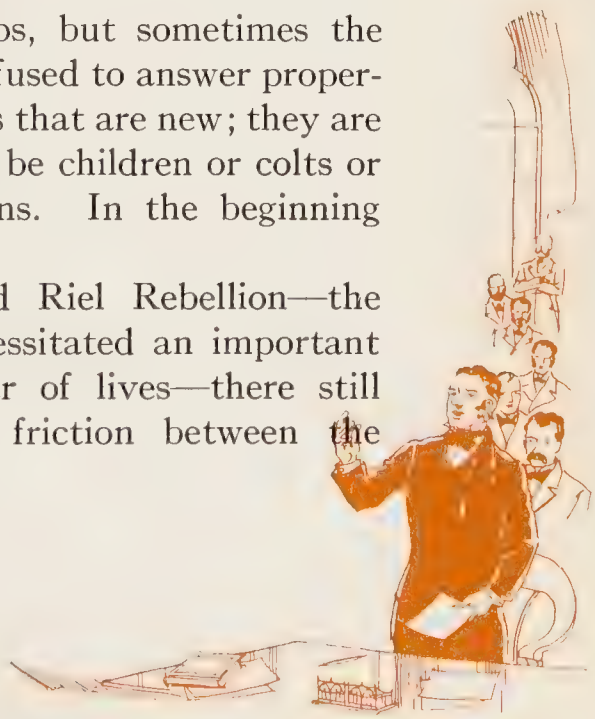
Sir John Thompson

THE North-West Rebellion under Louis Riel never menaced the existence of Canada, but Riel himself, defeated and a prisoner, nearly brought the Dominion into a serious position.

The Commonwealth had not yet attained her majority; Canada was still a collection of provinces insecurely united by laws formed by Parliament and not by tradition. The Dominion was young; she had not yet "found" herself—her condition contained an element of uncertainty; for nations, like ships, have to "find" themselves. A newly launched steamer has to shake herself and ease the stiffness of her newly welded plates before she can obtain the tranquil strength of the perfect liner—she has to "find" herself.

When Riel was conquered and captured and hanged, the Dominion was still an awkward, lumbering craft; seaworthy, but difficult to steer. Sometimes her helm was not steady enough perhaps, but sometimes the great mass of the ship herself refused to answer properly. It is so with nearly all things that are new; they are awkward at first, whether they be children or colts or governments, soldiers or nations. In the beginning they are usually a little foolish.

In the year of the second Riel Rebellion—the Saskatchewan affair which necessitated an important expedition, and cost a number of lives—there still existed a certain amount of friction between the



Thompson addressed the excited legislators

peoples of the Upper and Lower Canadas; Ontario and Quebec as they had now become. It was a friction difficult to define, caused probably by a nervous regard for the future rather than by reason of any existing difference. Tension is the word that describes the condition more perfectly than friction—the sort of tension a soldier feels immediately before the battle, or an athlete experiences as he waits for the starter's signal.

All Canada was against Riel when he was an active revolutionary; troops from Quebec marched with the soldiers of Ontario, and the French-Canadian fought alongside the British-Canadian when the fighting began. But when it was all over, and Riel a prisoner charged with high treason, the situation changed; the people of the two provinces ceased to see eye to eye in this matter.

Quebec, or a majority of the people of Quebec, declared that Riel must not be hanged. Ontario, or a majority of the people of Ontario, demanded that Riel, a traitor, must be executed.

Riel was a French-Canadian; his execution made him appear a political martyr to many of his own race, even to some of those who had fought against him in the North-West.

The other side of the picture was being displayed in Ontario. There existed in Toronto a certain indignation at the indignation displayed in Montreal. Torontonians accused Riel of the murder of one of their citizens, Scott; they said he had tried to incite Indians to revolt against the Government.

This political *contretemps* happened nearly twenty

At fifteen he was articled to a lawyer

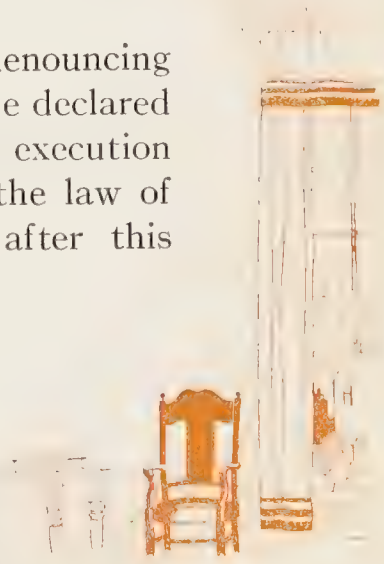
years after Confederation; the situation to a majority of thinking people must have appeared not merely incomprehensible, but insane. But it is remarkable how much more disturbing to politicians was the dead revolutionary compared with the living Riel.

When Parliament met after the execution—Sir John A. Macdonald was in power—a motion was put forward by the Opposition "That this House feels it its duty to express its deep regret that the sentence of death passed upon Louis Riel, convicted of high treason, was allowed to be carried into execution."

Then followed a fierce debate. The mover of the motion described the Government's action as a provocation flung at the face of the whole nationality; it was a breach of the laws of justice; it was an evidence of weakness on the part of the Ministry. That was the tone of the speeches.

One or two members defended the Government, but the atmosphere of the House was distinctly hostile. The debate was to be wound up by Blake, leader of the Opposition, and a Nova Scotian ex-judge named Thompson; a man who had but recently joined the Government as Minister of Justice. Blake was known to be the most brilliant speaker in the House, and much was expected of him; Thompson was an unknown quantity who had no reputation for either statesmanship or for eloquence.

Blake delivered a magnificent oration, denouncing the Government from every point of view. He declared that Riel's trial had been illegal and his execution contrary to the laws of justice as well as the law of humanity. When the House adjourned after this

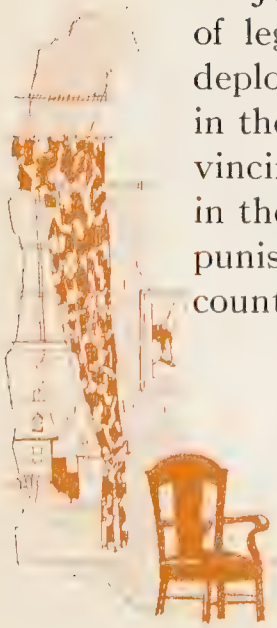


speech—it was long past midnight—it was felt that the Opposition Leader's denunciation had reached the highest flights of eloquence, and that it was unanswerable. Members thought that the Macdonald Government was doomed—no one could contend against the fire and logic of Blake; the battle was over.

When it reassembled, the Chamber was crowded; the House was electric with excitement; men seemed filled with that passion which is called "mob" passion, and their emotions showed in flushed cheeks and glittering eyes. It was a tense moment; a great moment.

John Thompson rose in his place and the beauty of his voice seemed like the ringing of a great silver bell in a cathedral. In appearance he was nothing—nothing more than is usual in a man rather short and squat, with a rubicund face and fair hair. There was a humourous twist to the mouth and a merry look in his eye; but sometimes the humour of the mouth appeared somewhat sardonic, and the merry eyes flashed. But he was not a man of magnificent pose or splendid appearance; and he spoke without the fire of eloquence or the fury of passion. It was just his voice—a voice whose timbre suggested honesty and whose clarity seemed to mean common sense.

John Thompson spoke to that half-demented throng of legislators and he defended the Government. He deplored the necessity of hanging, but he justified it in the case of Riel. His arguments were lucid and convincing. He pointed out the necessity of maintaining in the wild North-West "the deterrent effect of capital punishment"; of showing the inhabitants of that country that the Government was "strong, not only

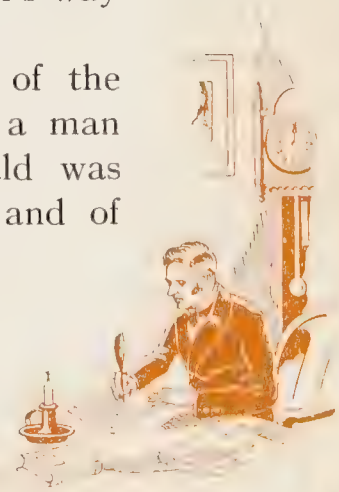


to protect, but to punish as well." "I am not disposed," he said, "remote as that country is, strong as the calls are for vigorous government there and for the enforcement of every branch of the law, to be inhuman or unmerciful in the execution of the penalties which the law pronounced; but in relation to men of this class, men who time and again are candidates for the extreme penalty, men who have despised mercy when it was given to them before, I would give the answer given to those who proposed to abolish capital punishment in France, 'Very well, but let the assassins begin'."

When the vote on the motion was taken, it was found that the Government had obtained an overwhelming victory. The Opposition secured 42 votes; the Government 146. No wonder that Sir John A. Macdonald remarked "in the course of my life I have discovered many things, but John Thompson is the greatest of all my discoveries."

This speech of Thompson's was not only a great triumph, it was also his maiden effort in the House of Commons. He had been for a brief period, Prime Minister of Nova Scotia and a judge on the Bench of his province, but never before had he spoken in the House. In fact he was a new arrival at the central seat of Government—Sir John A. Macdonald had discovered him, and produced him suddenly and most dramatically at the proper moment, as was the great man's way with men.

After this speech Thompson became one of the foremost leaders of the Conservative Party; a man marked for the highest position. Macdonald was ageing and ailing; losing his grip of people and of



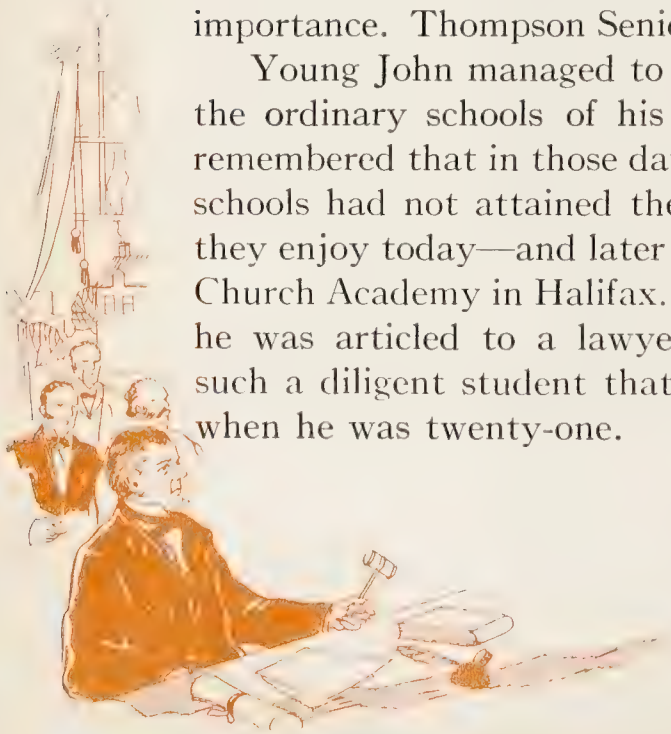
Thompson worked far into the night

things. The old magnetism was fading; the old warrior found his armour heavy, and his arm weakening. Thompson had arrived at the moment—the psychological moment.

But let us begin at the beginning. Who was this brilliant political warrior who so bravely stepped into the Government breach and so valiantly saved the Conservative citadel—and thereby, perhaps, the Dominion also?

John Sparrow David Thompson was born at Halifax, Nova Scotia. His father was an Irishman who came from Waterford in his youth and settled in Nova Scotia before that province had become greatly populated. Thompson Senior, who was a man of considerable ability and education, for many years was employed as Queen's Printer, subsequently obtaining a more remunerative appointment as Superintendent of the Nova Scotian Money Order system. He was also a journalist of merit, employed by Joseph Howe as assistant Editor of the *Nova Scotian*. These positions, though honourable and interesting, were not productive of monies commensurate with their importance. Thompson Senior was always a poor man.

Young John managed to obtain a fair education at the ordinary schools of his native city—it must be remembered that in those days of "private" academies, schools had not attained the high degree of efficiency they enjoy today—and later he took a course at a Free Church Academy in Halifax. At the early age of fifteen he was articled to a lawyer in Halifax, and proved such a diligent student that he was called to the Bar when he was twenty-one.

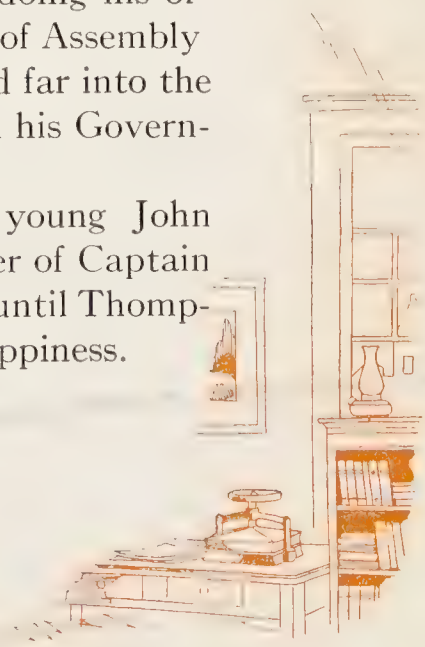


Thompson became Judge of the Supreme Court

Like hundreds of other law students, John Thompson, realizing that young advocates do not usually earn large incomes immediately they commence practising their profession, mastered the art of stenography. Thus he was able to earn, during the hungry years of waiting for clients, a comfortable livelihood by reporting the debates in the Legislative Assembly. This reporting work had distinct advantages apart from those of a pecuniary nature; it familiarized the young lawyer with the procedure of Parliament, and brought him into a political atmosphere in a manner intimate and yet detached. Naturally he became known personally to the leading politicians, and in consequence his legal business began to assume respectable proportions.

The young lawyer-reporter was not a man of imposing personality, neither did he appear to be possessed of outstanding brilliance. He was simply a hard-working, a very hard-working youngster possessed of an indomitable perseverance and a determination to succeed. At the threshold of his career he was confronted with an additional handicap by the sudden physical breakdown of his father. In order that his family might not suffer hardship, young John carried out his father's official duties, as well as doing his ordinary work at the office and in the House of Assembly For several years the young lawyer worked far into the night in order that his father might retain his Government appointment.

In 1870, at the age of twenty-six, young John Thompson married Annie Affleck, daughter of Captain Affleck of Halifax; the union, which lasted until Thompson's death, proved to be one of perfect happiness.



Four years after this, John Thompson began to take a practical part in public affairs. He was elected an alderman of Halifax, and shortly afterwards he became a member of the City Board of School Commissioners.

His first important chance as a lawyer came in 1877 when he was selected by the United States Government to act on their behalf in the Halifax Fisheries Commission. Naturally this was purely a legal engagement, and in no way reflected on the depth of Thompson's loyalty to Canada; it was simply an affair which produced for him a large fee.

In the same year the rising lawyer was returned to the Legislative Assembly as the Conservative member for Antigonish. For less than a year he was a private member in opposition. In October, 1878, the Conservatives came into power and John Thompson was appointed Attorney-General in the Government formed by the Honourable Simon H. Holmes. Within a few months this Government became popularly known as the Holmes-Thompson Government—a sure indication that John Thompson was making rapid progress in the political arena of his province. But this provincial political popularity was not destined to last long; in fact with the possible exception of George Brown's Premiership, on the eve of the tragic comedy of the double-shuffle, Thompson's reign as Premier must surely be the shortest on record. On the 25th of May, 1882, he accepted office; on the 20th of June his Government was defeated at the polls, and on July 27th Thompson had already accepted an appointment in the Supreme Court of the province.

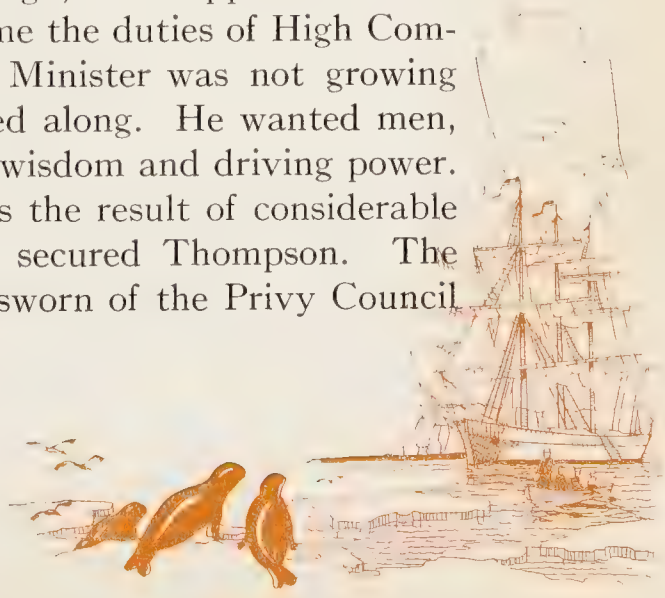
So our young lawyer-reporter-politician slipped

aside from the hurly-burly of competitive existence, and, clad in silk and ermine, assumed the tranquil life of a Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. John Thompson was then thirty-eight years of age—a man unusually young for such a high appointment in the judiciary.

Fate and Sir John A. Macdonald ordained that the young Judge should not remain many years on the Nova Scotian Bench; the Dominion Prime Minister was searching for men, and his long-ranged vision brought into view John Thompson.

John Thompson's reputation as a strong, quiet, able man had greatly impressed many of the leaders at Ottawa; his work as American advocate for the United States before the Halifax Fisheries Commission, and his success in the Nova Scotia Parliament had made an impression upon the members of the Dominion Cabinet. As a judge he also became greatly distinguished for sincerity of purpose and for the possession of a certain human kindness not always obvious in holders of high judicial office.

It was in 1885 that Macdonald sent the invitation to John Thompson to join the Ministry. Tilley had just been relieved from active politics, Alexander Campbell was anxious to resign, and Tupper wanted to proceed to London to assume the duties of High Commissioner—and the Prime Minister was not growing younger as the years slipped along. He wanted men, young men of courage and wisdom and driving power. With some difficulty and as the result of considerable persuasion and appeal, he secured Thompson. The Judge left the Bench, was sworn of the Privy Council



Seal fisheries in the far North-West

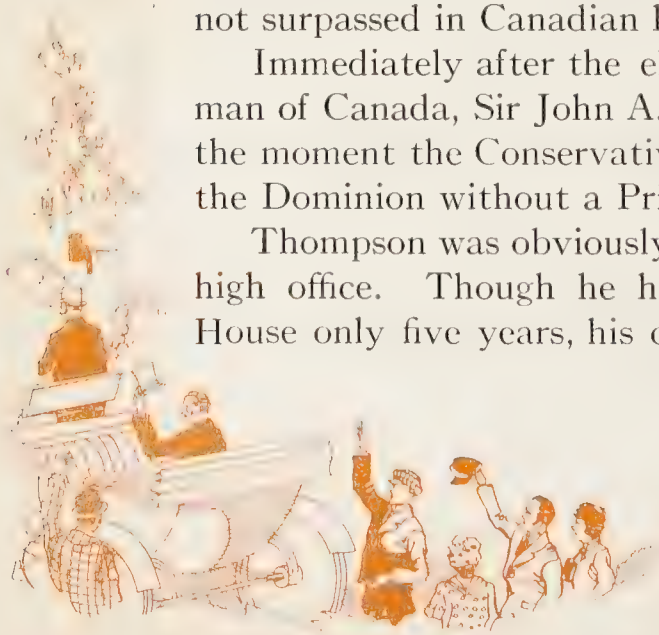
and appointed to the Dominion Cabinet as Minister of Justice. The member for Antigonish accepted a county Judgeship, and Thompson had no difficulty in obtaining the seat he had so brilliantly represented in the Provincial Parliament.

Almost immediately after the new Minister of Justice had taken his place in the Dominion House, the great Riel debate occurred. This, as we have said, brought Thompson into the forefront of Canadian affairs. Shortly after this he was appointed legal advisor to the British plenipotentiaries who arranged the Fisheries Treaty with the United States in 1886. For his brilliant work at Washington in this connection he was Knighted by Queen Victoria, and became Sir John Thompson, K.C.M.G.

From this period until 1891, Sir John Thompson sustained his high office in the Cabinet and in the Dominion. He became, as it were, the Prime Minister's right hand, and relieved Macdonald of much of the strenuous work which fell to the lot of a parliamentary leader perpetually faced with a strong and ambitious Opposition. During this period he also sponsored many of the measures which made the sessions famous as a political period of constructive statesmanship perhaps not surpassed in Canadian history.

Immediately after the elections of 1891, that great man of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald, died; and for the moment the Conservative Party was leaderless and the Dominion without a Prime Minister.

Thompson was obviously the man to succeed to the high office. Though he had been in the Dominion House only five years, his outstanding ability marked



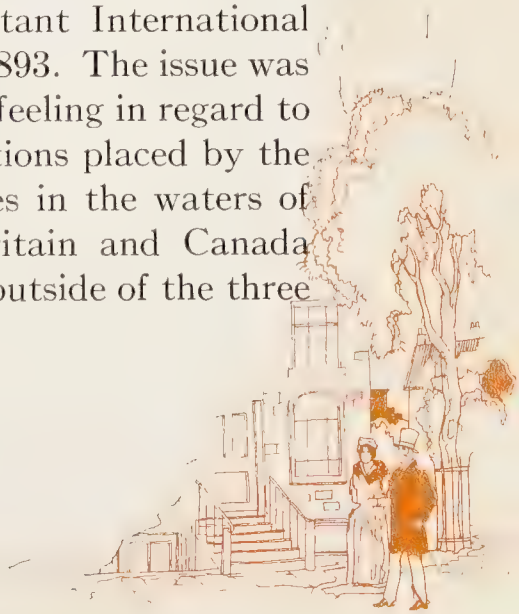
On his return crowds cheered him

him for the leadership. But, influenced by his inherent modesty, Sir John Thompson refused the Premiership, and the Honourable J. J. C. Abbott, afterwards Sir John Abbott, reigned in his stead. Abbott was a member of the Senate; so, inevitably, Thompson was forced to lead the Commons.

For little more than a year this rather ambiguous political condition continued to exist. In Canada as in other countries, it is almost essential that the Prime Minister should be a member of the Commons, available at all times to answer the questions of the representatives of the people, and to make statements in the same manner. Abbott, through failing health, was, in November, 1891, forced to retire, and Sir John Thompson became Premier.

As Prime Minister, Thompson maintained his unbroken history of success. With the exception of his defeat at the polls in Nova Scotia in 1882, he had never known failure; and that '82 failure merely meant the exchanging of the appointment of Premiership for that of Judgeship in the High Court.

The outstanding event of his rule at Ottawa happened, not in the Dominion Capital, but in France. He was selected by the British Government as one of their two arbitrators upon the Behring Fisheries dispute. The meetings of this important International Tribunal were held in Paris during 1893. The issue was one of the most serious importance; feeling in regard to the rights and wrongs of the restrictions placed by the United States upon the seal fisheries in the waters of the far North-West ran high. Britain and Canada claimed all the freedom of the seas outside of the three



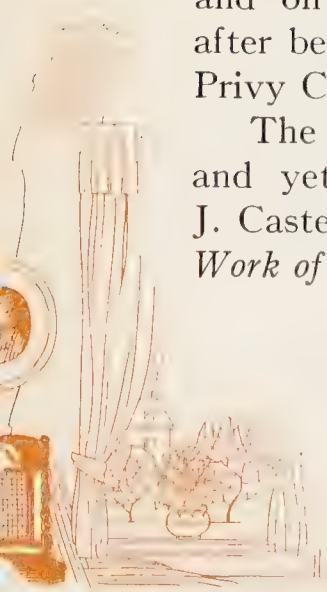
mile limit; the United States claimed the whole of the Behring Straits as a seal preserve—included, as it were, in the goodwill of Alaska, which they had purchased from the Russians.

The findings of the Tribunal were favourable to the British-Canadian claims, and Thompson gained a personal triumph. Amongst a great crowd of the most brilliant statesmen and judges and advocates of the world, the Prime Minister of Canada had proved an outstanding figure. He displayed an intimate knowledge of international law, and a rare capacity for presenting his case in the strongest manner. Thompson made a strong impression on the great jurists gathered in Paris, and at the conclusion of sittings the Queen appointed him a member of the Imperial Privy Council.

On his return to Canada Sir John was given such a reception as is usually accorded only a conqueror who has saved his country; he was fêted and dined; crowds met him and escorted and cheered him. In the opinion of the people he had achieved a great victory for Canada, and, even more important than that, he had brilliantly maintained the intellectual and diplomatic equality of Canadian statesmen with statesmen of the world's older countries.

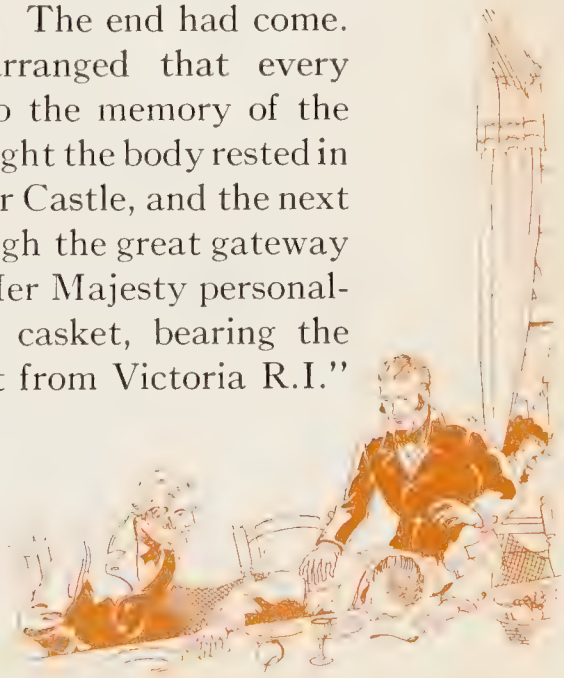
In 1894 Sir John Thompson returned to England, and on the 12th of December, 1894, immediately after being introduced and sworn in a member of the Privy Council at Windsor Castle, he died.

The account of his death, so sudden, so terrible, and yet so profoundly impressive, is published by J. Castell Hopkins in his invaluable volume, *Life and Work of Right Honourable Sir John Thompson.*



Mr. Castell Hopkins quotes Lord Breadalbane in whose arms the Canadian Prime Minister died. "After Sir John had been sworn," said Lord Breadalbane, "we retired to the luncheon room. While we were sitting there, he suddenly fainted. One of the servants and I each took his arm, got him into the next room, and placed him beside a window. I got some water and sent a servant for some brandy. In a short time he recovered somewhat, and seemed much distressed at having made what he regarded as a scene, remarking 'It seems so weak and foolish to faint like this.' I replied 'one does not faint on purpose, pray do not distress yourself about the matter.' He begged me to return to luncheon. Of course I would not hear of this. I remained with him till he seemed completely recovered. He rose to accompany me back to the luncheon room. I offered him my arm, but he walked unaided. He cheerfully remarked 'I am all right, thank you.' Meanwhile Dr. Reid, the Queen's physician, whom I had sent for, arrived. Within two or three minutes after Sir John's return to the luncheon room, and I believe before he tasted the cutlet or whatever was placed before him, I saw him suddenly lurch over, and fall almost into Dr. Reid's arms." The end had come.

Queen Victoria personally arranged that every possible honour should be paid to the memory of the great Canadian statesman. That night the body rested in state in the Marble Hall of Windsor Castle, and the next day, ere the coffin was borne through the great gateway beneath the St. George's Tower, Her Majesty personally placed two wreaths upon the casket, bearing the words, "A mark of sincere respect from Victoria R.I."



He suddenly lurched over

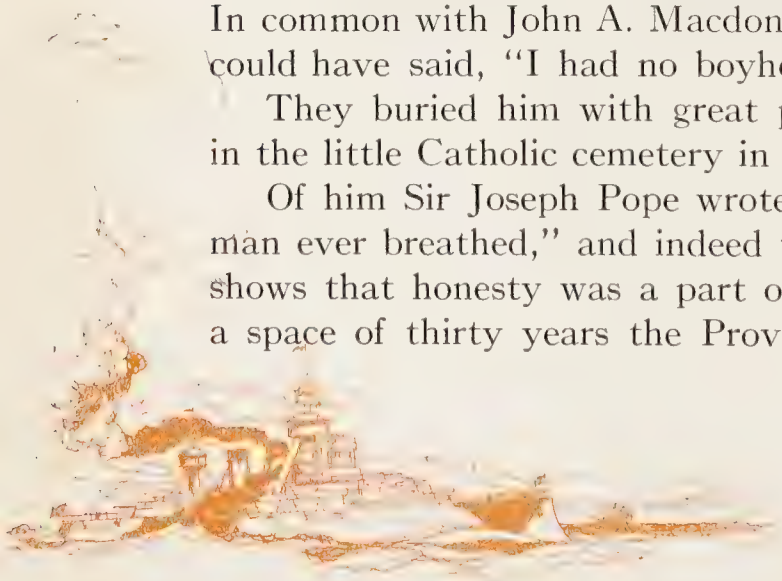
The second, composed of laurel, was by the Queen's command, to rest on the coffin throughout its voyage to Canada. The next day, from a window in the Castle, the Sovereign lady reverently watched the sad little procession following the hearse drawn by great black horses across the earth-filled moat, into the little town outside the Royal gates.

The Imperial Government offered the almost unprecedented privilege of having the body conveyed home to Canada in a battleship. This offer Lady Thompson accepted, and so Sir John Thompson came home again, at rest and in peace, with great honour.

An analysis of Sir John Thompson's public life shows what a remarkable man he must have been. Of those years of public service he spent only one—the first year—as a private member of Parliament. Three years he was a Judge of the Supreme Court; four, Attorney-General of Nova Scotia; seven, Minister of Justice in the Dominion Government, and for two years he was Prime Minister of Canada. This represents the achievements of a Great Man, who, through poverty, left school at fifteen, and who, before he became a man, had to materially contribute towards the support of his family. In common with John A. Macdonald, John Thompson could have said, "I had no boyhood."

They buried him with great pomp and ceremony in the little Catholic cemetery in Halifax.

Of him Sir Joseph Pope wrote, "No more upright man ever breathed," and indeed the record of his life shows that honesty was a part of his being. Within a space of thirty years the Province of Nova Scotia

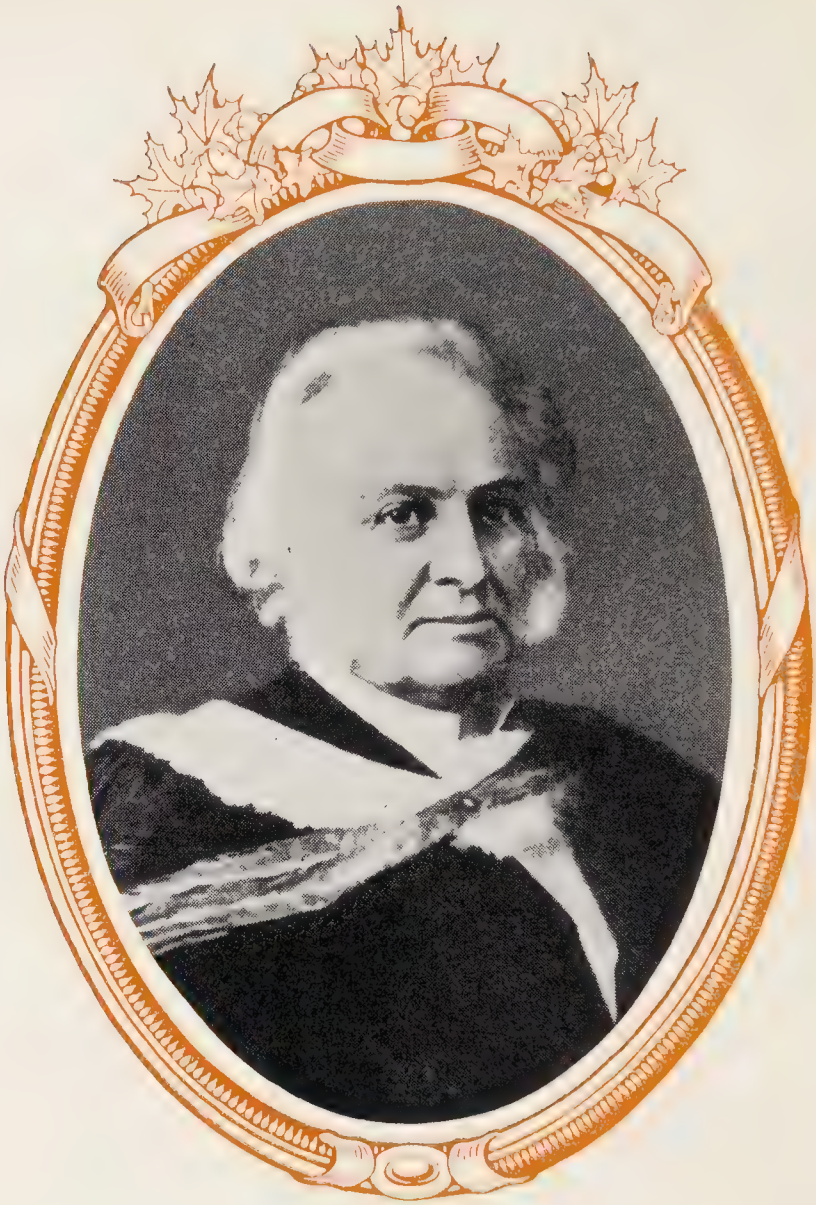


Sir John Thompson's body was conveyed home to Canada on a battleship

produced three Great Men for Canada on three different occasions within that period when Canada was in dire need of men; the first was Howe, the second Tupper, and the third John Thompson.

The first was brilliant, the second adventurous and splendidly courageous, the third steady and strong—with a fine intellect and a clear understanding which he gave to his country. Great Men all! And not the least great of the trio was the Right Honourable Sir John Sparrow Thompson, P.C., K.C.M.G., Q.C., who died in the service of his country, aged fifty years.

Egerton Ryerson



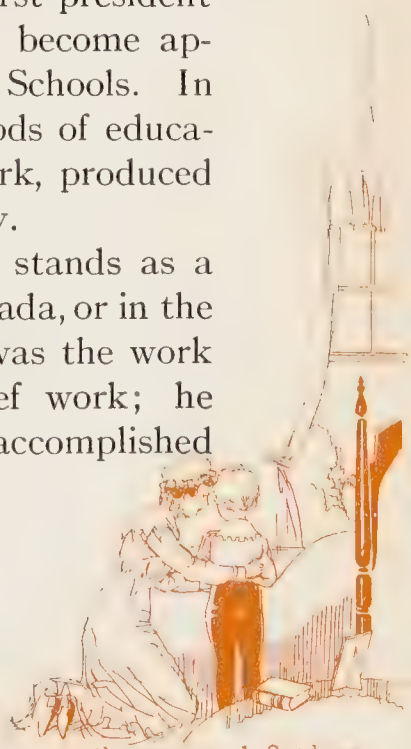
Egerton Ryerson

1803-1882

Egerton Ryerson

EGERTON RYERSON was one of the most amazing men Canada ever produced. Though the son of a man of considerable property he was practically self-educated; he worked on a farm or as an usher in a school until he was twenty; he became an itinerant Methodist preacher at twenty-two, a missionary to the Indians a few years later, and then a pamphleteer and publicist, measuring his strength with the redoubtable Dr. Strachan—and by no means getting the worse of the encounter. Next he became the editor of an important paper. He took a leading part in the establishment of Victoria College, even visiting England to collect funds for its erection, and to place the point of view of Canadian Methodists before the officials in London. He wrote a series of articles which gained him the bitter enmity of William Lyon Mackenzie, and then he returned to Toronto to become the first president of Victoria College, and eventually to become appointed superintendent of Ontario Public Schools. In this office he reorganized Ontario's methods of education, and after thirty years' strenuous work, produced the system which, in outline, exists today.

The Ontario educational system now stands as a model of efficiency without superior in Canada, or in the world, and the basis of that superiority was the work of Egerton Ryerson. This was his chief work; he wrote some excellent books of history and accomplished



Ryerson's mother prayed for him

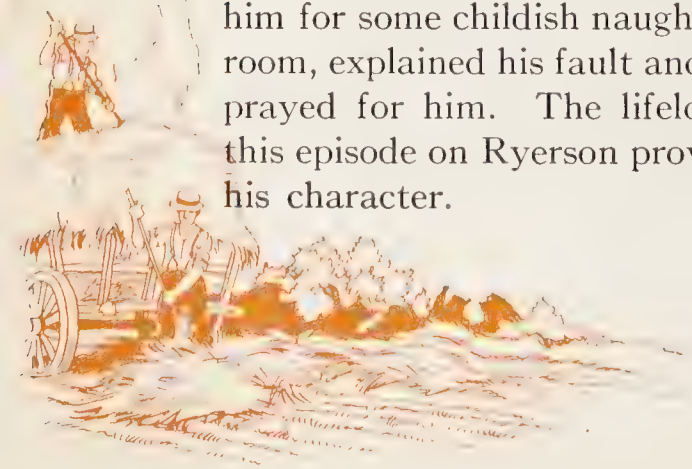
much religious work of great merit, but the reorganization of Ontario schools was the greatest of his life's accomplishments.

Egerton Ryerson was born on March 24th, 1803, in Charlotteville, near Vittoria, near London, Ontario. His father had been an officer in the British Army during the American Revolution. Afterwards this gentleman became a colonel of militia, and fought with three of his sons in the War of 1812. Egerton was naturally excluded from joining his father in that war since he was but nine years of age.

Colonel Ryerson was a stalwart Empire Loyalist, an agriculturist, and something of a martinet. Born in the British Colony, New Jersey, his family were originally of Dutch and Danish stock. Egerton's mother was a descendant of one of the early Massachusetts Puritan settlers.

Though Ryerson claimed that his early life was mainly influenced by the saintly character of his mother, there is little doubt that he also inherited a good deal of his father's soldierly qualities of courage and discipline —for throughout his life he never deviated one yard from the path which he thought it his duty to follow. As a child he was of an extremely sensitive nature, somewhat emotional, and easily affected by environment.

There is a familiar story of the enormous effect on his life made by an episode in which his mother, to chide him for some childish naughtiness, took him to his bedroom, explained his fault and clasping him to her heart, prayed for him. The lifelong impression created by this episode on Ryerson proves the emotional nature of his character.



Ryerson became immersed in farm work

The boy Egerton went to the local grammar school where he was instructed, in the dull old-fashioned ways, into the mysteries of reading, writing and arithmetic; at fourteen he attended a series of remarkable lectures given by two men who taught nothing but English grammar. At the work proceeding from these lectures he succeeded so well that he was engaged to assist these lecturers, who guaranteed to teach any diligent student to parse any sentence in the English language within a few weeks of study.

After this the lad became immersed in farm work. He ploughed and sowed and reaped and mowed and became a farmer's boy. A fine, healthy open-air life, but not one suited to the mentality of Egerton.

At eighteen he joined the Methodists, thus following the example of his elder brothers. This action met with the stern reproval of the stout old Anglican soldier, Colonel Ryerson. "Egerton," he said, "I understand you have joined the Methodists. You must either leave them or leave my house."

So the boy left home and became an usher in a grammar school in the London, Ontario, district. It is characteristic of him that, throughout the two years he remained in this position, he paid, out of his meagre wage, the cost of a hired man who took his place on the old farm so that his father should not be deprived of his labour by reason of the form of religion he had felt impelled to adopt.

At the expiration of two years Colonel Ryerson suddenly appeared at his son's school and abruptly said: "Egerton, you must come home." Then the old man walked away. In two or three days, as quickly as

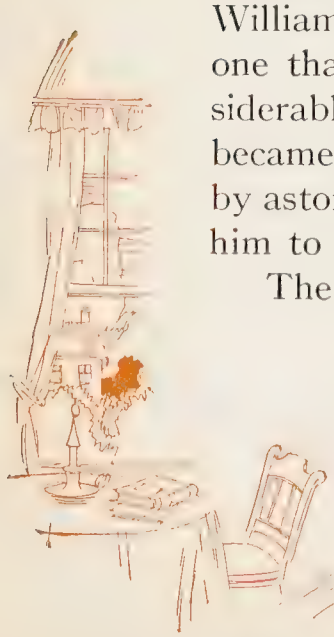
possible, his son followed, and once more took over his work on the farm.

A year after this, with the aid of a brother, Egerton again left the farm and entered an important grammar school in the Gore district of Hamilton. Here, under the famous scholar and teacher, John Law, the boy applied himself diligently to his studies. He made special study of Latin and Greek, and his ardour astounded, even alarmed, his master. He warned the youth that no brain could stand the unceasing strain he was putting on his mind; "You will work yourself out," he said. And in this, the celebrated Mr. Law proved himself a wise prophet, for after six months of concentrated study, Egerton was down with brain fever, and before he recovered, his weakened system contracted inflammation of the lungs.

When at long last he recovered from these particularly malignant maladies, the youngster resumed his studies for a few months. But before he was twenty-two he had decided on the nature of his life's work, and had become a Methodist preacher.

He first became a preacher almost by accident. He attended a religious meeting where his brother William was expected to preach, but who by reason of a sudden illness was unable to fulfill his engagement. William's illness proved to be of a serious nature, and one that would probably incapacitate him for a considerable period. Egerton's profound grief when he became aware of this misfortune was almost equalled by astonishment when the officials of the church asked him to take his brother's place for the next year.

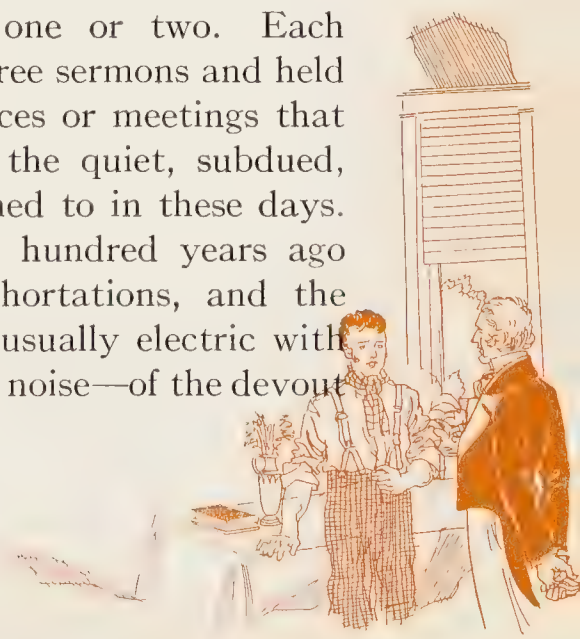
The lad accepted, and thus he interrupted his



studies to become an itinerant Methodist preacher at the age of twenty-two years.

This was in 1825; the actual date when he started work in the ministry was April 3rd, and he preached his first sermon on the Easter Sunday of that year. For the next six months he endured the hardships which, a century ago, encompassed his calling. He journeyed from settlement to settlement, hamlet to hamlet, log hut to log hut on horseback, through primeval forest and by way of roads which were mud streaks less pleasant to traverse than the open fields or forest paths. He was obsessed by the same strong, puritanical religion which, in early days, had changed the history of England and in some measure caused the settlement of New England.

Ryerson's one mission in life was to convert sinners and to save souls according to his own theory of salvation. So he held services in tents and barns and log huts—in those early days there were few meeting houses in the rural districts of Ontario. He rode many miles every day, and if possible he preached every day; when there were not enough people to form a congregation and justify a sermon, he would hold a service of exhortation to an audience of one or two. Each Sunday he invariably preached three sermons and held two class meetings, and the services or meetings that he held bore no resemblance to the quiet, subdued, religious services we are accustomed to in these days. The Methodist missionaries of a hundred years ago were almost violent in their exhortations, and the atmosphere of each meeting was usually electric with emotion and filled with a tumult of noise—of the devout



Egerton," he said, "You must either leave them or leave my house"

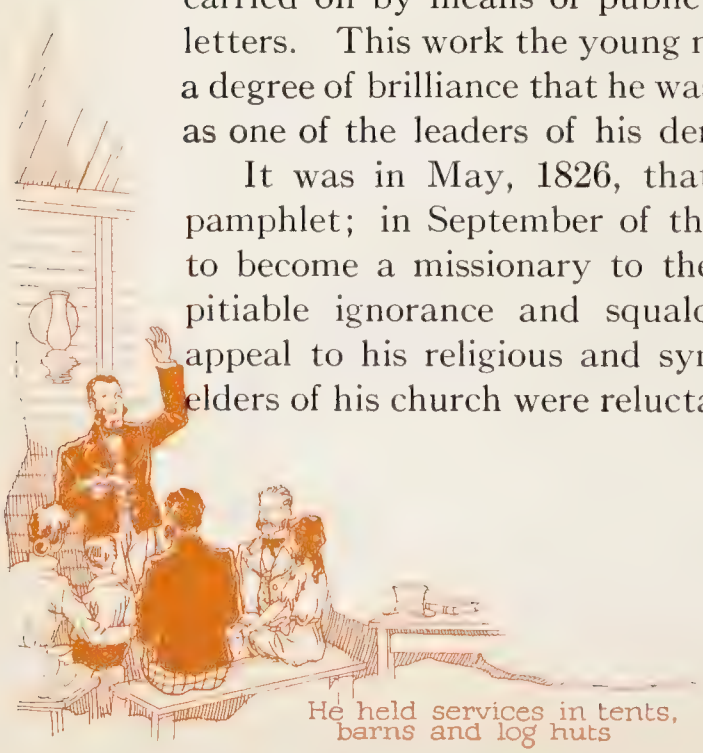
outpourings of the saved, and the pathetic sobs of the penitent.

That a lad of twenty-two, but recently recovered from a protracted attack of brain fever and lung affection, could endure the strain of such a life as this is extraordinary. But for six months he carried on, until, in fact, September of 1825; then he became attached to the York and Yonge Street circuit and accepted even heavier duties. He continued his work as an itinerant preacher, but also engaged in the long drawn out controversy in regard to the question of the Clergy Reserves.

Various nonconformist bodies at that time were engaged in a strenuous struggle with the established Church of England, demanding some share in the vast territories put aside in the early days of Ontario's settlement for religious purposes. The Anglicans, under the stalwart and dogmatic Strachan, demanded the whole of these territories for the established church; and to this certain bodies of nonconformists objected.

The Methodists chose Ryerson to represent them in this controversy, which, for the most part, was carried on by means of public pamphlets and printed letters. This work the young missionary did with such a degree of brilliance that he was immediately acclaimed as one of the leaders of his denomination.

It was in May, 1826, that he published his first pamphlet; in September of the same year he decided to become a missionary to the Indians, whose life of pitiable ignorance and squalor made an irresistible appeal to his religious and sympathetic nature. The elders of his church were reluctant to allow the brilliant



He held services in tents, barns and log huts

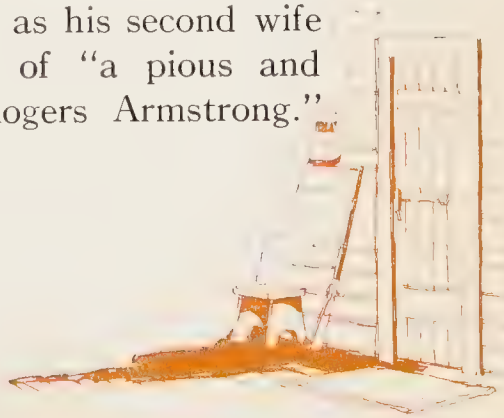
young pamphleteer to disappear in the wilderness, distant from any call to take up his pen to repel any sudden attack in regard to the Clergy Reserves. But Ryerson was insistent, and in the end permission was given on condition that the missionary preached two Sundays out of four in the Town of York.

Egerton proceeded at once to the squalor of an Indian village on the Credit. Here he lived the life of the Indians, sleeping in an already crowded wigwam, eating native food, and assisting in the every day labours of the people. He instructed them in the mysteries of practical agriculture, and taught them how to fence their land and protect their crops. His bed during this period consisted of a bare wooden plank, and his covering a single blanket. Yet in after life he frequently avowed that this life suited him; that he was never more happy than when he lived among those semi-civilized Indians, for whom he acquired a large affection.

All this time he was continuing the controversial work, writing and publishing—efforts which he greatly disliked, which, in fact, he described as an affliction.

In September, 1828, Ryerson married Hannah Aikman, the daughter of the proprietor of the house in which he had lived during his stay in Hamilton, when studying under Dr. Law.

This lady died in January, 1832, leaving a young son and daughter to the care of her husband. The son died in infancy, but the daughter survived her father. In November, 1833, Ryerson married as his second wife Miss Mary Armstrong, daughter of "a pious and wealthy merchant, Mr. James Rogers Armstrong."



This lady survived her husband with one son, Charles Egerton Ryerson.

In 1829 the Methodist conference established the *Christian Guardian* newspaper, and called upon Egerton Ryerson to accept the editorship, charging him to vindicate the character and demand the religious rights of his people. Here was an entirely new opening and occupation for the missionary, who with some reluctance accepted the position, and forthwith began to develop into a first rate editor.

The policy of his paper consisted of demanding equal religious and civil rights of free churches in a free state, and the provision for all people, without distinction of class or creed, of an efficient and equal system of education.

At this time Egerton was twenty-six years of age, and, though a preacher, had not yet been admitted to the full responsibilities of the Methodist ministry. On his appointment as editor he was immediately ordained an elder, and assumed a prominent place in the councils of the church.

For two years he occupied the editorial chair, writing and speaking in the strongest terms of advocacy of these matters. They were years of political turmoil throughout the Canadas; Papineau and Mackenzie were already agitating—tremendously. But, though Ryerson's bitter opposition to the Clergy Reserves brought him alongside Mackenzie in that detail, he never shared the agitator's desire for revolution. In fact his instincts were those of a Conservative, except that he demanded religious and educational equality; but, at that time, these two great issues were opposed

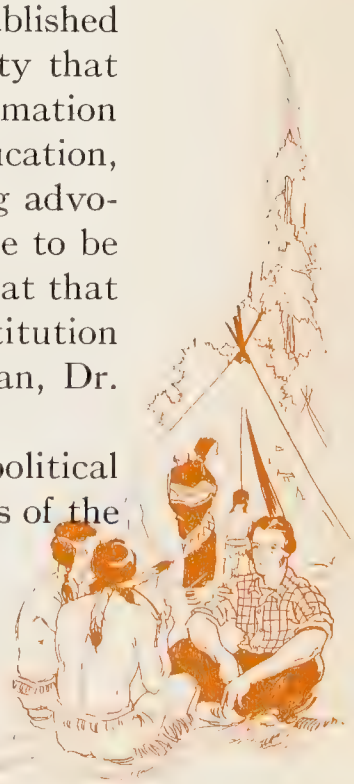
by certain vested authorities who, if not Conservatives proper, were at least high Tories.

His writings must have been rather fiery during those first two years of his occupancy of the *Guardian's* editorial chair; must have very nearly touched party politics. They attracted great attention, and in the spring of 1833 Ryerson was persuaded to make a journey to England as the bearer of a petition signed by twenty thousand people. There he studied English politics, and prepared a series of essays which in the winter of 1833 he published in the *Guardian* under the title of *Impressions.*

He returned to Canada to find Toronto seething with unrest and talk of revolution, the erection of a republic, or annexation with the United States.

These policies filled him with disgust, and he exercised no precaution and used no reticence in condemning them in the pages of his paper. William Lyon Mackenzie and all the revolutionary leaders attacked him without mercy, but he carried on independently and alone. He could become a member of no established party because he could find no established party that he could join—one that would include the reformation of the Clergy Reserves, and the equality of education, with its policy. At this time he began his long advocacy of the establishment of a Methodist college to be affiliated with the University of Toronto, which at that period was exclusively a Church of England institution under the despotic control of that arch sectarian, Dr. Strachan.

Possibly all this journalistic clamour and political advocacy disturbed the gentle souls of the elders of the

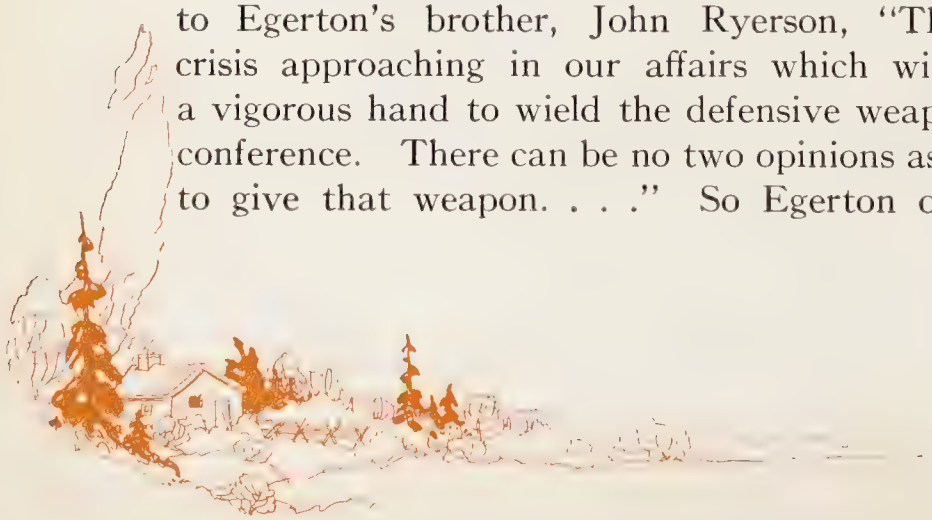


At times Ryerson lived with the Indians

Methodist convention; anyway, in 1835 Ryerson was relieved of the responsibility which had devolved upon him during his occupancy of *Guardian's* editorial chair, and a Rev. E. Evans was elected to reign in his stead. In that year Ryerson again visited England to seek funds and a charter for the new Academy now nearing completion. He made this visit a memorable one in English political circles by publishing a series of letters in the *Times* on "The Affairs of the Canadas." In these letters he vindicated the general loyalty of Canadians and repudiated the policies of Mackenzie and Papineau, showing that these revolutionaries were without a large number of sympathizers or followers.

During his prolonged visit to England, Ryerson acted as a kind of independent advisor to the British Government, and this advice he continued to offer up to the period of the rebellion of 1837-38. It is impossible to deny that during this period Ryerson was regarded with a certain amount of suspicion by the English authorities, as he was regarded with deep hatred by the revolutionary leaders. He advocated certain reforms which the English governors and the governments failed to grant, and at the same time he had no sympathy with reform by revolutionary methods.

Towards the end of 1838 Ryerson was again elected to the editorial chair of the *Guardian*. The head of the conference on the occasion of this re-election wrote to Egerton's brother, John Ryerson, "There is a crisis approaching in our affairs which will require a vigorous hand to wield the defensive weapon of the conference. There can be no two opinions as to whom to give that weapon. . . ." So Egerton once more



returned to do battle with his adversaries in the columns of his own newspaper. He had now come to the conclusion that the most satisfactory method of dealing with the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves was to devote them to general educational purposes; also he adopted the policy contained in the famous Durham report. In support of these policies he hammered away in every edition of his newspaper. Naturally he aided the Government in every possible way to obtain a sufficient number of volunteers to repel the Fenian attacks along the American frontier, but afterwards he assaulted the Government for the shabby way in which they dealt with those volunteers, and "their slanderous imputations of the insurrection to reformers generally, when four-fifths or nine-tenths of them had proved their loyalty by their acts."

A quieter element entered Ryerson's life when, in 1841, Royal assent was given at the hand of Lord Sydenham for extending the character of Upper Canada Academy under the new name of Victoria College so as to confer on it university powers. Ryerson was appointed first president of the College under its enlarged charter.

For his work in connection with the establishment of Victoria College, Ryerson received the honourary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the Wesleyan University, Middleton, Connecticut.

In 1843, after the death of Sir Charles Bagot, Sir Charles Metcalfe arrived in Toronto as the new Governor of Ontario. This gentleman immediately fell foul of his Parliament, quite erroneously believing that many of the members were disguised republicans.

Ryerson caused many schools to be built

The result was that the Government resigned, and the Governor was left to govern with the aid of a few men—the best council he was able to gather together. It was one of those unfortunate affairs which have happened during the political history of the province.

Doctor Egerton Ryerson, President of Victoria College, took the side of the Governor in this squabble, and published a long and strong defence of his attitude in a Toronto paper called the *British Colonist*. This defence became famous, and shortly after its publication Metcalfe's chief advisor offered Ryerson the position of Superintendent of Education.

The appointment caused a small political scandal at the time—it being freely stated that it represented the reward for the publication of the defence—but the result was the establishment in Ontario of the finest educational system in the world at that date. Even in England in those days the educational system was bad—utterly bad; in Ontario it was worse.

Teachers in rural schools were frequently uneducated and incompetent. The wages offered for the work could only attract people who elsewhere would probably obtain no employment. And the school houses were usually of a character inferior to the average barn.

It was in 1844 that Doctor Ryerson assumed the office of Superintendent of Schools. For the next eighteen months he toured Europe and the United States investigating the educational systems in the various countries.

Then he started work, and after encountering and overcoming bitter opposition, he succeeded, as a result

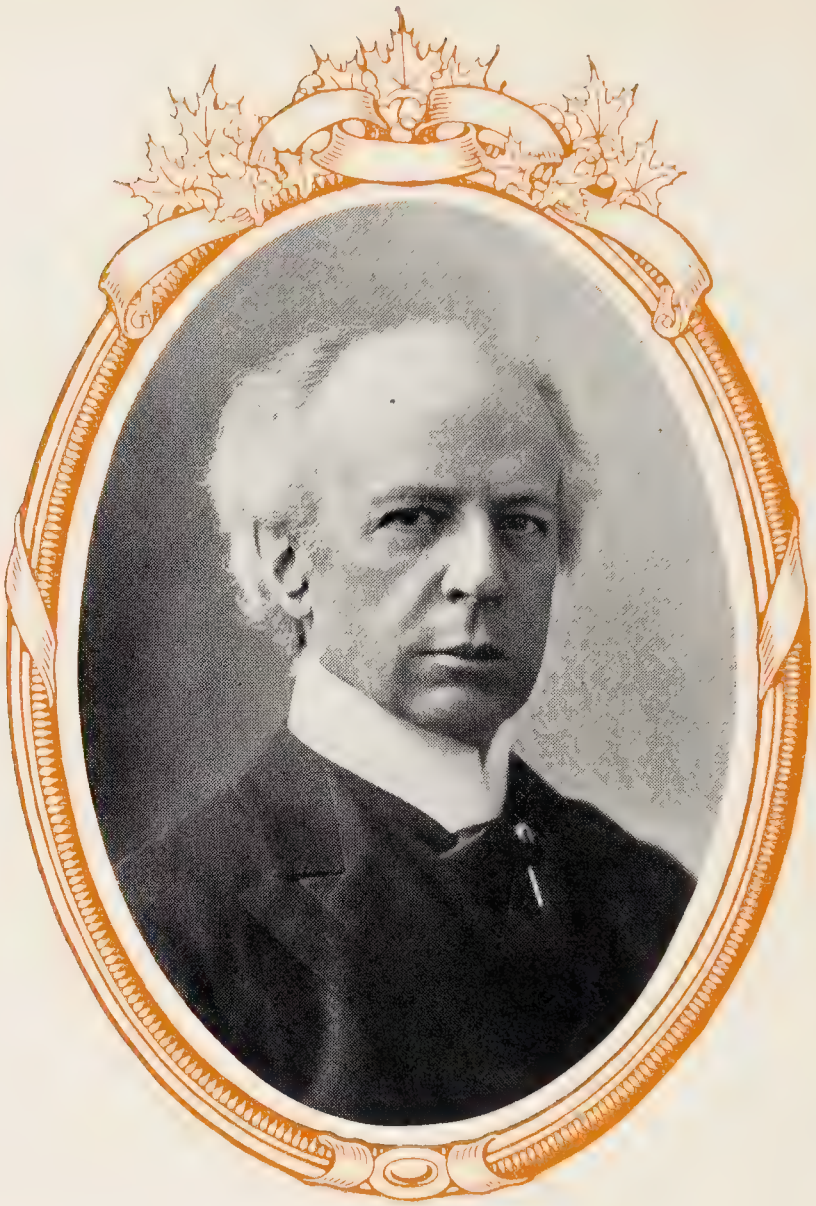
Toronto was seething with unrest

of thirty years' endeavour, in producing a magnificent system of education—elementary and secondary education. He trained teachers, he built new schools, and he made education compulsory and free. New, accurate and interesting text books took the place of old dog-eared tomes of antiquity and probable inaccuracy. Last of all he instituted an efficient system of supervision and inspection.

The work he did was a perfect work, of its kind, and it was of inestimable value to Ontario and to Canada.

In 1876 he retired from office and devoted his remaining days to literary work. And in 1882, honoured and beloved by all who knew him, he died—Egerton Ryerson, D.D., a missionary of religion and of education; a Great Man and a Great Canadian.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier



Sir Wilfrid Laurier

1841-1919

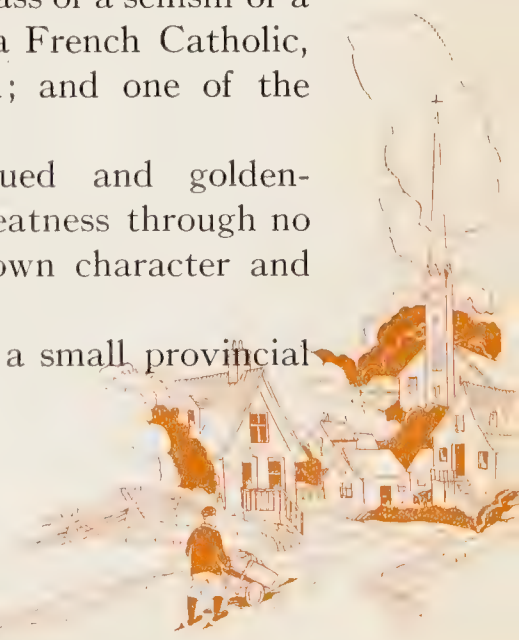
Sir Wilfrid Laurier

"We have learned to love British Institutions, because in British Institutions we have found more freedom than we could have had as subjects of France; and how many times in that grand old City (Quebec) which I have the honour to represent, looking at the banner of St. George waving over her proud citadel, how many times have I said to myself that that flag represented the defeat of my ancestors, but at the same time recalled the thought that it was the flag the most precious to the human race, the flag of liberty. I love England, I honour and esteem English Institutions. I do not regret that we are now subjects of the Queen instead of France, but may my right hand wither at my side if the memories of my forefathers ever cease to be dear to my heart."

Thus, at Toronto in the year 1887, Wilfrid Laurier declared his nationality and proclaimed himself a Canadian. This great statesman was no parochial or provincial patriot, no member of a class of a schism or a cult; he was not merely of Quebec a French Catholic, he was of all Canada a Canadian; and one of the greatest of them all.

This splendid man, silver-tongued and golden-hearted, rose from obscurity to greatness through no influence save the strength of his own character and the fine quality of his own brain.

In the comparative obscurity of a small provincial

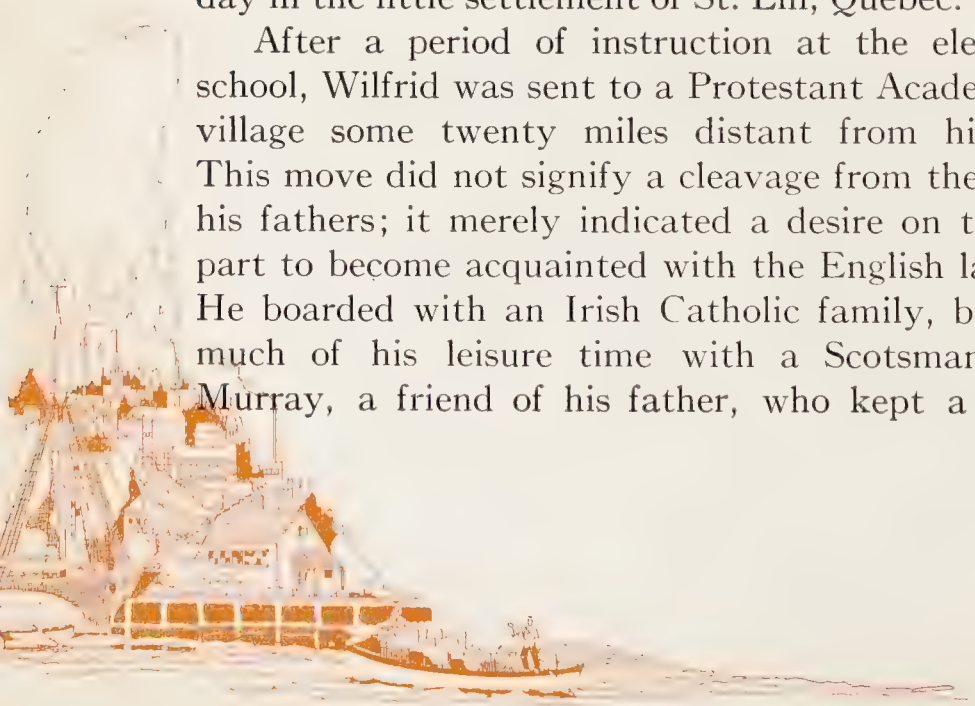


St. Lin, Quebec, Laurier's birthplace

centre, St. Lin, in the County of L'Assomption, Quebec, Wilfrid Laurier was born on the twentieth day of November, 1841. Although his father followed the somewhat precarious profession of a land surveyor in a rural district, Laurier's family for generations had been agriculturalists—farmers tilling land of modest acreage. His mother was a woman of artistic ability—she had natural gifts for drawing and designing. This lady died four years after Wilfrid's birth, and the later years of the boy's childhood were influenced by a step-mother, Odeline Ethier, a former nurse of the family, whom his father married shortly after losing his first wife. This step-mother, a kindly simple-hearted woman, was always greatly beloved by Laurier, who made frequent pilgrimages to her homestead long after fame had reached him, and after great affairs obliged him to count each moment of his time almost as public property.

It was Laurier's privilege to boast that he was a Canadian of the eighth generation; his ancestor of the first generation had arrived in Canada from Normandy two centuries before the future premier saw light of day in the little settlement of St. Lin, Quebec.

After a period of instruction at the elementary school, Wilfrid was sent to a Protestant Academy at a village some twenty miles distant from his home. This move did not signify a cleavage from the faith of his fathers; it merely indicated a desire on the boy's part to become acquainted with the English language. He boarded with an Irish Catholic family, but spent much of his leisure time with a Scotsman named Murray, a friend of his father, who kept a store in



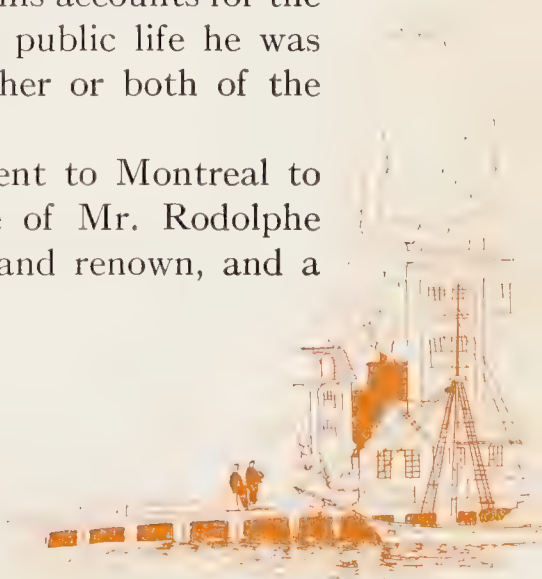
Montreal at the time of Laurier's first visit

the village. It was the habit of Laurier to serve in this store as often as possible in order to practise his English. One would imagine that in those early days his English must have been with a French-Irish-Scottish accent; possibly this explains why in his adult life his accent was so delightful. At twelve years of age the boy entered L'Assomption College, where, for seven years, he remained immersed in the usual curriculum of a Catholic School. He did not, we learn, pay much attention to games or outdoor sport during this period, but nevertheless he gained a quiet but distinct ascendency over his fellow pupils by his eloquence in debate, and the possession of that indescribable but potent quality we call—for lack of a better term— personal magnetism.

His particular type of amusement in those early years of his life appears to have taken the form of surreptitious visits to the village courthouse, in order that he might hear the legal arguments in local cases, or else he would attend some political meeting and listen to the speeches of orators who, at that period, were plentiful in the land.

Naturally young Laurier distinguished himself as a scholar—good in all subjects, but especially good in classics. Without encouragement or great assistance from his masters, he made a profound study of English, both the language and literature. This accounts for the facility with which throughout his public life he was able to address an audience in either or both of the languages of Quebec.

At the age of twenty Laurier went to Montreal to study law. He entered the office of Mr. Rodolphe Laflamme—an advocate of power and renown, and a



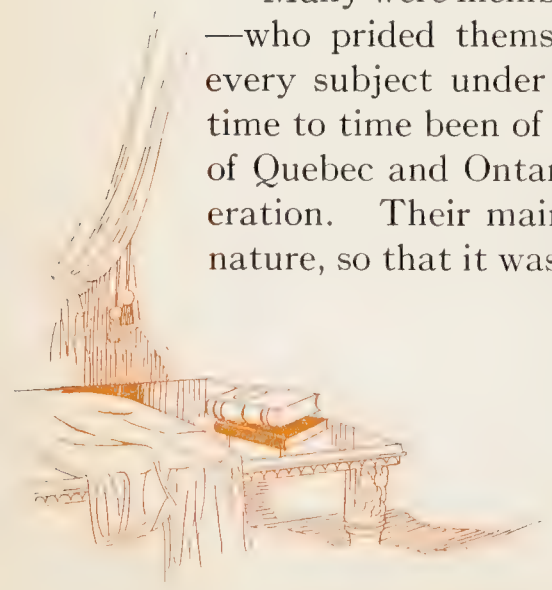
man of great political influence. Also he took his law course at McGill University, where by reason of his bilingual ability he was able to take the lectures in both French and English.

In his third year he took the B.C.L. (Bachelor of Civil Law) degree with such distinction that he became valedictorian for his graduating class, and thus, at convocation of 1864, he made his first public appearance as an orator. On this occasion he made a great impression, before a gathering of distinguished people, both for the quality of his address and the charm of its presentation. The young lawyer proved himself an eloquent speaker; men who loomed large in legal and public affairs began to take notice of this graduate of McGill with so large a gift of language.

Laurier was admitted to the Bar in 1864 and for three years he carried on a desultory practice in Montreal.

This period of his life must have been interesting to the future prime minister. It was his first taste of real freedom from either rigid discipline or exacting study. He was surrounded by scores of interesting friends, many of whom have since become distinguished. These men who had been with him at L'Assomption College and McGill University were a high spirited crowd, no doubt, filled with the reckless splendour of youth.

Many were members of the "red" party—the *Rouges*—who prided themselves on their advanced views on every subject under the sun. The *Rouges* have from time to time been of importance in the political history of Quebec and Ontario, both before and since Confederation. Their main platform was of a revolutionary nature, so that it was eyed with hostility by the Roman

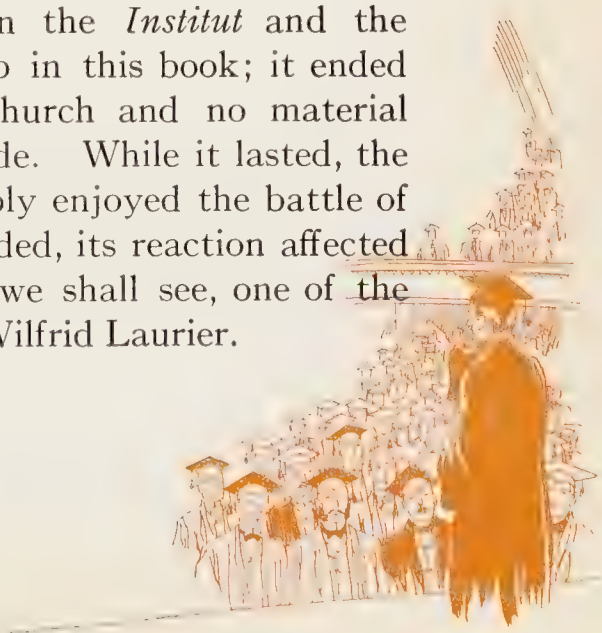


Catholic Church, whose priests have always been firm upholders of the constitution.

Almost as soon as Laurier entered upon his law studies in Montreal he became a member of a literary and scientific society known as the *Institut Canadien*. This society—a kind of brotherhood of young intellectuals—had been formed in 1844 with the object of obtaining and maintaining civil independence free from ecclesiastic domination. With the bitter quarrel which the establishment of this *Institut* occasioned we have no concern in these pages. Its existence must be mentioned in order to show that at the youthful age of twenty-one Laurier flung himself heart and soul into a very bitter fight for what he considered a necessary reform. Amidst a crowd of men—educated men gifted with intelligence—the young lawyer soon came into prominence. We read of his being appointed chairman of meetings, vice-president of the society, and an eloquent member of deputations sent to interview the distinguished leader of the powerful organization which sought to destroy the society.

This strange struggle had not ended when, in 1866, Laurier was forced by failing health to leave Montreal and seek more salubrious surroundings.

With the quarrel between the *Institut* and the priests we have nothing to do in this book; it ended to the satisfaction of the Church and no material damage was done to either side. While it lasted, the students of the *Institut* possibly enjoyed the battle of words, and when the affair ended, its reaction affected very few people—though, as we shall see, one of the people seriously affected was Wilfrid Laurier.



Laurier addressing convocation at McGill University, 1864

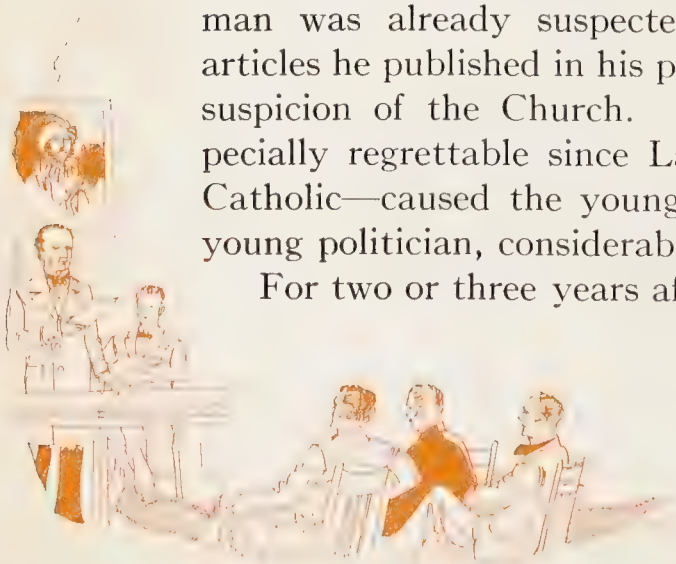
During his last three years in Montreal, Laurier had dabbled in journalism, as do so many young lawyers. In a paper called *L'Independence Nationale* he published a series of sketches depicting men and affairs; no trace remains of these early adventures in writing—they attracted little or no attention.

Simultaneously with his decision to leave Montreal an opportunity occurred for the purchase of an interest in a small local newspaper, *Le Defricheur*, published in St. Christophe, a little town a few miles distant from Arthabaskaville, a somewhat larger centre, in which he had decided to take up practice as a lawyer.

His editorial experiences were not a great success. As a newspaper *Le Defricheur* lacked capital. It is just as fatal for a newspaper to lack capital as it is for a snowflake to fall into a furnace. The journal staggered on for a few months, and then, despite a grim struggle put up by the youthful editor, it died of financial hunger.

Perhaps this was not a very great tragedy after all; Laurier now had all his time to devote to law and to politics. The evil that the poor *Le Defricheur* really accomplished was that it gained for its editor a certain antagonism among many of the local priests. Owing to his connection with the *Institut Canadien* the young man was already suspected; certain rather violent articles he published in his paper added strength to the suspicion of the Church. This regrettable fact—especially regrettable since Laurier was always a loyal Catholic—caused the young man, when he became a young politician, considerable pain and inconvenience.

For two or three years after the death of his paper



Laurier was a member of the "*Institut Canadien*"

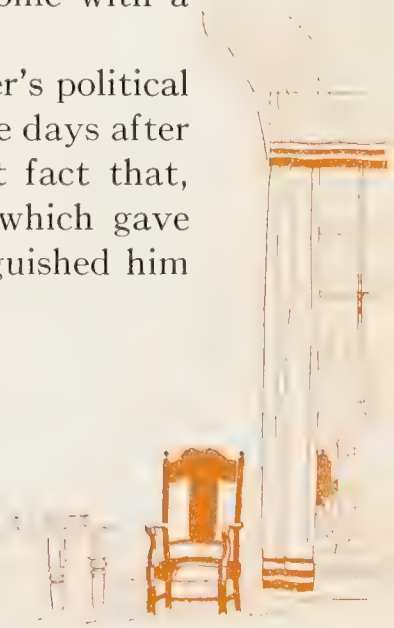
Laurier lived the struggling life of a rather impecunious lawyer in a country district. But during those years he became known and popular through the district. His ability to use the two languages stood him in good stead; he was equally at home with the English as he was with the French people.

In the midst of these days of struggle—in the year 1863—the enterprising barrister married Miss Zoe Lafontaine, of Montreal. This union, which lasted throughout the statesman's life, exercised a most beneficent influence on his personal happiness and his great career.

In 1871 the first parliament held in Quebec after Confederation was dissolved, and an election was called for in the midsummer of that year.

This was Laurier's chance. He came forward as a Liberal candidate for Arthabaska in opposition to the former member, Mr. Hemming, a Conservative barrister of English nationality. The clerical party which was very strong in the district found itself in a quandary. They didn't like Hemming because he was not a Catholic, but liked him because he was a Conservative; whereas they liked Laurier for the sake of his religion, but hated his advanced views. In the end this party "sat on the fence" and Laurier romped home with a thousand majority.

Thus at the age of thirty Wilfrid Laurier's political career began. He made his first speech three days after the House opened, and it is an important fact that, contained in that speech, were sentences which gave promise of that large outlook which distinguished him throughout his public career.

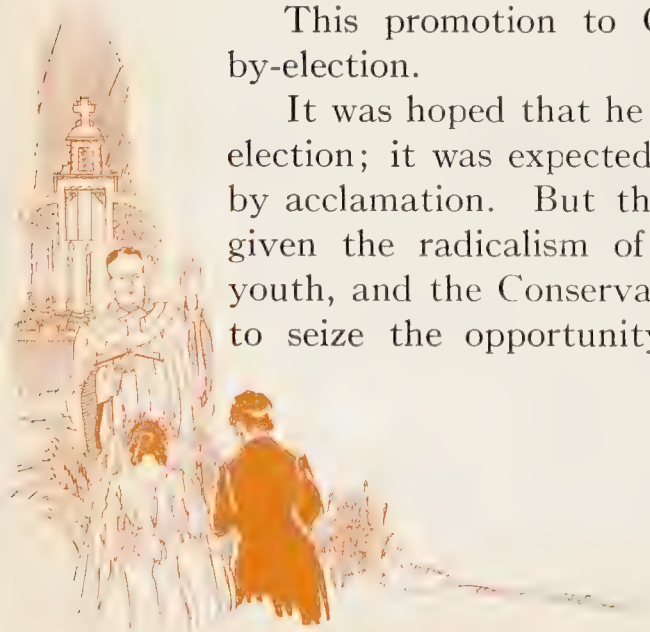


"Our respective forefathers were enemies, and waged bloody war against each other for centuries" he said, "but we, their descendants, united under the same flag, fight no other fights but those of a generous emulation to excel each other in trade and industry, in the sciences and the arts of peace."

In the Quebec Legislature Laurier spoke seldom, but always to the point and sometimes with eloquence. The Liberal leaders of the Commons, recognizing the value the young politician would be to them in the larger sphere, persuaded him to seek election to the Federal Parliament. Accordingly he resigned his seat in the Legislature and contested the Arthabaska division for the Commons. He was returned by a majority of two hundred and thirty-eight, and took his seat in the first Liberal Parliament returned after Confederation. Immediately Laurier became a success; he seconded the Speech from the Throne and received the most cordial congratulations from the Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie, and Sir John A. Macdonald, leader of the Opposition. The young lawyer increased in popularity and in power, and three years after entering Parliament, he entered Alexander Mackenzie's Cabinet as Minister of Inland Revenue.

This promotion to Cabinet rank necessitated a by-election.

It was hoped that he would not be opposed in this election; it was expected that he would be returned by acclamation. But the clerical party had not forgiven the radicalism of the days of his outspoken youth, and the Conservatives were more than willing to seize the opportunity to put up a most terrific



In 1868 Laurier married Miss Zoe Lafontaine

political fight against the new member for Arthabaska. He was accused of being a Protestant, a revolutionary, and of all kinds of foolish things. He was confronted by a large number of the big speakers of the Conservative Party, whereas he fought alone. Of his opponent the curé sent a laudatory letter for general distribution.

The result was that Laurier met defeat by a majority of twenty-nine, and thus found himself unseated. Another constituency, Quebec East, was immediately found for the young Minister, who, in spite of most vigorous opposition, was once more returned to Parliament with a majority of three hundred and fifteen.

This proved a popular victory among Liberals throughout the country. Laurier was fêted in Quebec City and Montreal; in Ottawa vast crowds met his train and he was escorted to the Prime Minister's home by six hundred torch bearers, four bands of music and upwards of one hundred carriages.

Laurier served in the Mackenzie administration for only one session. He proved an efficient, indeed an excellent Cabinet Minister, loyal to his chief and to his colleagues, and courteous to his opponents.

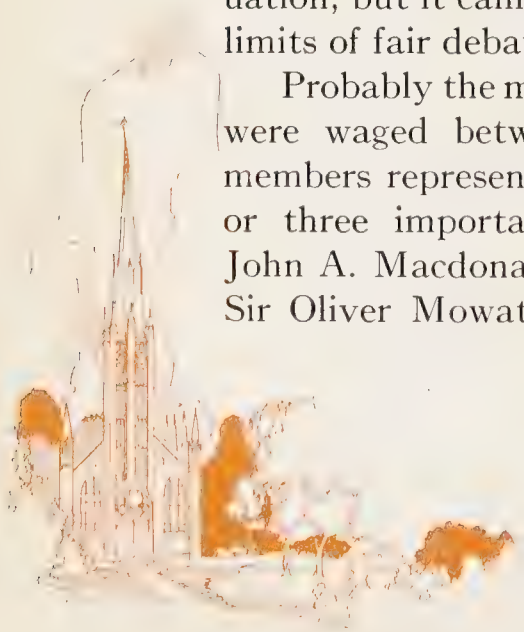
The session was one of some importance since it marked the parliamentary climax of the fight between two parties for a fixed tariff or unrestricted protection. Sir John A. Macdonald was fighting to regain power and freedom of fiscal action; Mackenzie was putting up a stiff defence of his Government and the fixed tariff. During the session Laurier proved one of the most able of Mackenzie's henchmen. He made many brilliant speeches—but to no purpose. In the election which followed the session Sir John A. Macdonald swept the

country, and in common with his leader, Laurier found himself in opposition.

The years that followed were of great importance in the history of Canada. They form, as it were, the epoch of constructive measures under Sir John A. Macdonald's government. For instance, during this period the first transcontinental railway, the C.P.R., was constructed; the policy of a customs tariff to protect the industries of Canada, known to this day as the National Policy, was introduced; and practical encouragement was given to ocean steamship services on the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, and the first direct lines to Australia and Japan were established.

In addition, this long session of power enabled the Conservatives to proceed with their programme of deepening the great inland canals in order to provide for the expansion of the inland waterways system, and made it possible for Sir John A. Macdonald to develop the machinery enabling Canada to negotiate commercial treaties with foreign nations.

Parliamentary debate on measures of this magnitude afforded an intelligent opposition ample opportunity for criticism. Laurier took full advantage of the situation, but it cannot be suggested that he exceeded the limits of fair debate.



Probably the most bitter controversies at this period were waged between the Liberal and Conservative members representing Quebec constituencies. On two or three important measures affecting Ontario, Sir John A. Macdonald came into fierce controversy with Sir Oliver Mowat, Premier of the Province. Mowat

fought his old law partner with the tenacity of a bulldog; it was he who gained for Ontario the consolidation of her ancient western boundary which retained for the Province a vast territory rich in timber and minerals, and also it was he who gained for his Government the licensing powers with their accompaniment of substantial revenues.

Laurier supported Mowat and Ontario in the fight the Province waged with Macdonald over these important measures. And thereby he found himself confronted by a considerable measure of hostility in Quebec.

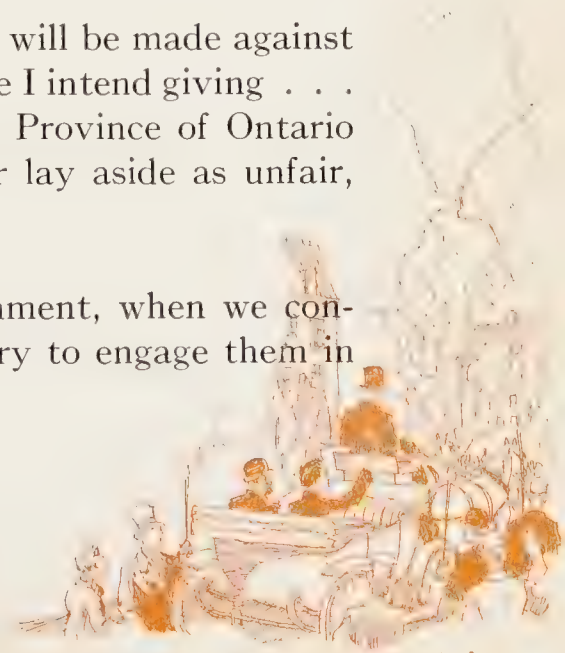
In those early days of Confederation there remained a certain amount of jealousy between the Provinces but recently disunited from the political partnership they carried on as Upper and Lower Canada. Quebec was jealous of any territorial expansion which might bring added voting power to her big neighbour, Ontario. Therefore members representing Quebec districts opposed the inclusion of certain territories of the North-West within the boundaries of Ontario. And they were greatly incensed at the conduct of Laurier in supporting this project.

In his speech supporting the boundary question, Laurier said—

"I do not fear the appeal that will be made against me in my own Province on the vote I intend giving . . . The consideration that the great Province of Ontario will be made greater I altogether lay aside as unfair, unfriendly and unjust."

And on another occasion—

"When we attack the Government, when we condemn their principles, when we try to engage them in



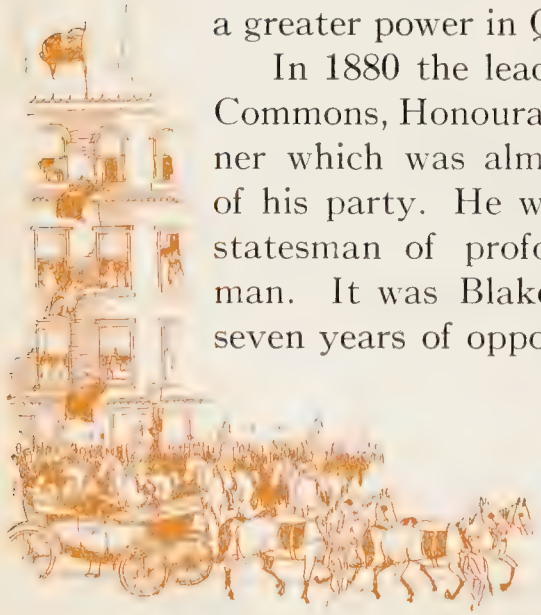
Six hundred torch-bearers escorted Laurier to the Prime Minister's house

battle on political grounds in the Province of Quebec, we are always met with the same cry, 'These gentlemen are enemies of your religion, they are Liberals, and it is not possible for a Catholic to be a Liberal' . . ."

In the affair of the North-West Rebellion and the execution of Louis Riel, Laurier took a very strong attitude. He condemned the Government in the House of Commons and on public platforms in eloquent phrases which, for such a man as the future Prime Minister was known to be, were almost immoderate. Obviously this attitude was due to no party prejudice or desire for political power. He spoke in Quebec from platforms which were shared by Conservative leaders; he shared with practically the whole of French-Quebec a feeling of horror and indignation at the hanging of the half-breed leader.

All this time, during the years of weary struggle in opposition—forced to devote his genius to political obstruction and destruction rather than to constructive statecraft—Laurier was increasing in strength among the leaders and the rank and file of the Liberal Party. In spite of the unceasing taunts of the Conservatives and the clerical party that no Liberal could be a Catholic, Laurier was becoming a power in Parliament and a greater power in Quebec.

In 1880 the leader of the Liberals in the House of Commons, Honourable Alexander Mackenzie, in a manner which was almost abrupt, resigned the command of his party. He was succeeded by Edward Blake, a statesman of profound genius and a very brilliant man. It was Blake who controlled the party during seven years of opposition.



Laurier represented Canada at the Diamond Jubilee, 1897

In 1887 Blake, tired—or perhaps a little bored—of the political game and of opposition in particular, resigned his office as Liberal leader. From among a group of singularly brilliant men the Liberal caucus elected Wilfrid Laurier in his stead. At this period Laurier was forty-six years of age; he had enjoyed ten years' experience as a party leader and three or four as an ordinary member. He was popular with the rank and file of the Liberals, and his merits were respected by the Conservatives, with a majority of whom he was also popular. By only a group of the most violent of the extremists among the Conservatives of Quebec was he distrusted and disliked.

In 1896, after experiencing eighteen years of opposition, the Liberals defeated the Conservatives, and Wilfrid Laurier became Prime Minister of Canada. Then followed fifteen years of continuous leadership—leadership and almost unlimited power.

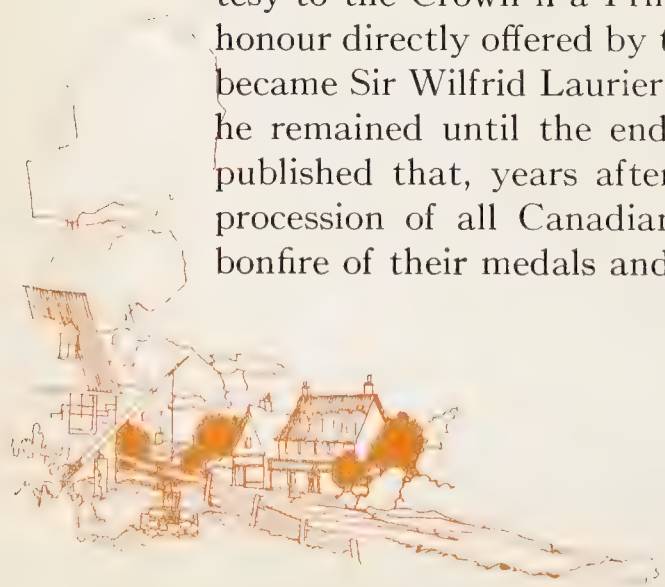
The French youth of St. Lin, in Quebec, who had not hesitated to serve behind a village store in order that he might learn English, had become the most powerful of all men of Canada.

Laurier's first cabinet included at least one man who had been his comrade and fellow member in the old days of *L'Institut Canadien*, C. A. Geoffrion, who had risen to eminence at the Montreal Bar. Another interesting member was Charles Fitzpatrick who had defended the notorious Riel at his trial in 1885; he accepted the ministerial appointment of Solicitor-General. Sir William Mulock, now so grave and gracious a Judge, became Postmaster-General in this first Laurier Cabinet and proved the most brilliant

Postmaster-General Canada ever possessed. It was by reason of his vision and initiative that the Inter-Imperial Postal Conference adopted penny postage within the Empire—an arrangement, unfortunately somewhat disturbed by the War.

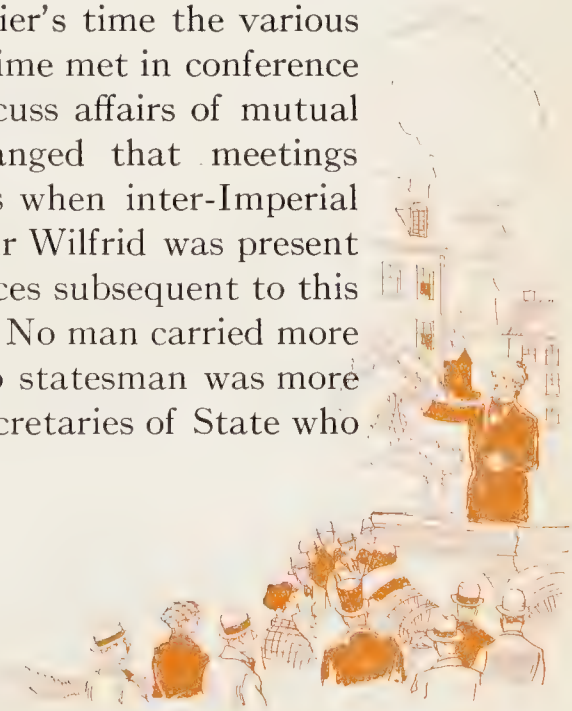
From the beginning Wilfrid Laurier proved a distinguished and sagacious Prime Minister. During his long term of office he caused many important laws to be placed on the statute book, and pursued a progressive policy of Canadian development. He was always eloquent, always just and always courteous.

The work he accomplished in England cannot be overestimated. At the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria be represented Canada with a rare distinction. The day before the gorgeous procession which accompanied the great Queen on her journey through London to the Cathedral where she gave thanks, the Prime Minister of Canada was astonished to find himself a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George; it is recorded that the first intimation he had of this honour was when an official greeted him as Sir Wilfrid. It is also on record that the title disturbed him, and he made an effort to decline it. This act was of course impossible; at that time and under those circumstances it would have been an act of discourtesy to the Crown if a Prime Minister had declined an honour directly offered by the aged Queen. So our hero became Sir Wilfrid Laurier, G.C.M.G., and Sir Wilfrid he remained until the end—though a story has been published that, years after this, he offered to head a procession of all Canadian title holders and make a bonfire of their medals and decorations.



There is no doubt that his first visit to England made a deep impression on Sir Wilfrid. Always loyal to the throne and firm in his faith of the union of Britain and Canada, the display of vast wealth and power, and the exhibition of the pageantry of the British Empire, so much in evidence at that time, affected the French-Canadian. Probably no parade or exhibition of power ever excelled that procession of the Diamond Jubilee. And he, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, occupied an important part in that procession. He was loudly cheered as he rode in his carriage behind his Sovereign; and he was conscious that among the troops gathered round the Queen and the Princes were Canadian troops—men of the Governor-General's Body Guard, of the Canadian Dragoons, and the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

Certainly after this visit Sir Wilfrid seemed to be in sympathy with a larger Imperialism. An Imperialism which has developed into the existing condition of Empire—the unity of self-governing Dominions and Dependencies and Colonies whose people, to the number of five hundred millions, proudly acknowledge allegiance to one Sovereign. In Laurier's time the various Dominion Premiers for the first time met in conference with the British Ministers to discuss affairs of mutual interest; and it was then arranged that meetings should occur at certain intervals when inter-Imperial matters might be considered. Sir Wilfrid was present at three of the London Conferences subsequent to this —those of 1902, 1907 and 1911. No man carried more weight at these meetings, and no statesman was more esteemed by the Premiers and Secretaries of State who



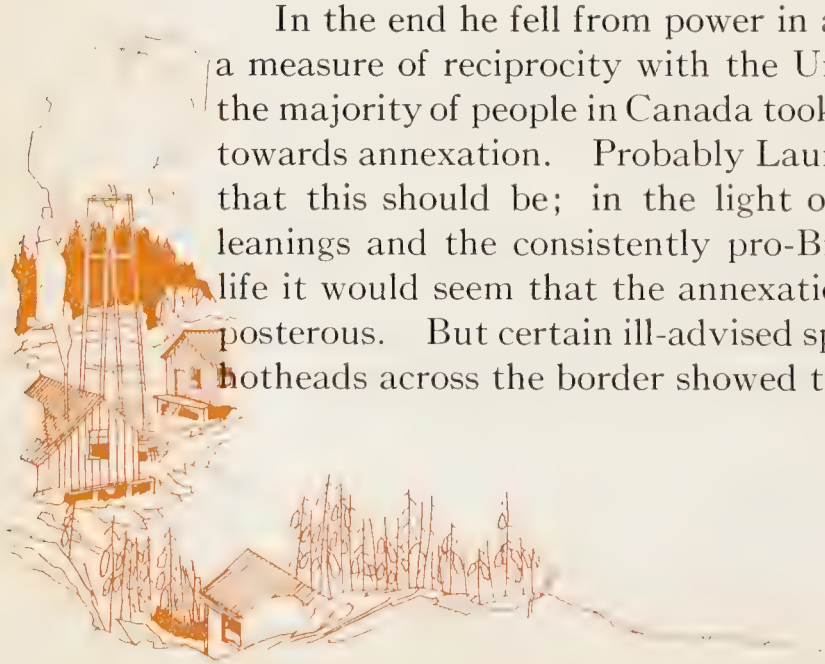
Laurier was a "Silver-Tongued Orator"

comprised these gatherings than was Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

It is not suggested that the fifteen years during which Sir Wilfrid was in power were wholly devoted to visits to England by the Prime Minister. Parliament, under the Liberal Government of that period, accomplished much in the direction of constructive statesmanship.

In his younger days, even in the earlier years of his political life, Laurier was a zealot—a zealot fighting for what he considered to be great causes—but nevertheless he was involved in the complicated dangers which frequently encompass youthful zealotry. But as the years rolled on and as he became increasingly powerful, his opinions broadened and his policies were adapted to the needs of the times. As the country grew in strength and became more thickly populated; as the West developed and the minerals were unearthed in the North and the trees were cut for pulp; so Laurier began to amend his fiscal policy. From being a free trader he became something of a protectionist. He believed in reciprocity with the United States, and he gave England a trade preference.

In the end he fell from power in attempting to pass a measure of reciprocity with the United States which the majority of people in Canada took to be the first step towards annexation. Probably Laurier never intended that this should be; in the light of his Imperialistic leanings and the consistently pro-British policy of his life it would seem that the annexation theory was preposterous. But certain ill-advised speeches by political hotheads across the border showed that the idea was in



A typical mining camp in the early days

the minds of at least some of the U.S.A. leaders. Anyhow Parliament refused to entertain the proposition, and Laurier fell from power, and once more went into opposition.

During the Great War he proved his patriotism by sinking political differences and, as a private member, supporting the Borden Government to the full extent of his power—though he firmly opposed conscription. During the year 1917 the project of a Coalition Government was advocated by a great many responsible and influential members of the Conservative Party. The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, approached Sir Wilfrid with a suggestion that a Union Government should be organized, with an equal representation of both parties, and with compulsory military service as the chief feature of its policy.

Laurier, however, found it impossible to entertain this proposal since it involved acceptance of the policy of conscription. His position, be it remembered, was cruelly embarrassing. From the outbreak of the War he had served Canada and the Empire with single-minded zeal and fidelity. But he found himself confronted by a phenomenon as extraordinary as history has ever presented—a situation which showed that many French-Canadians were incensed against France, and were opposed to conscription in a war which was to save France. Laurier knew that England had delayed conscription till it was found that conscription was necessary; that Australia, that loyal Dominion, had voted against compulsory military service; and he knew full well that if he joined a Union Government, he could not have carried his own Province with him.

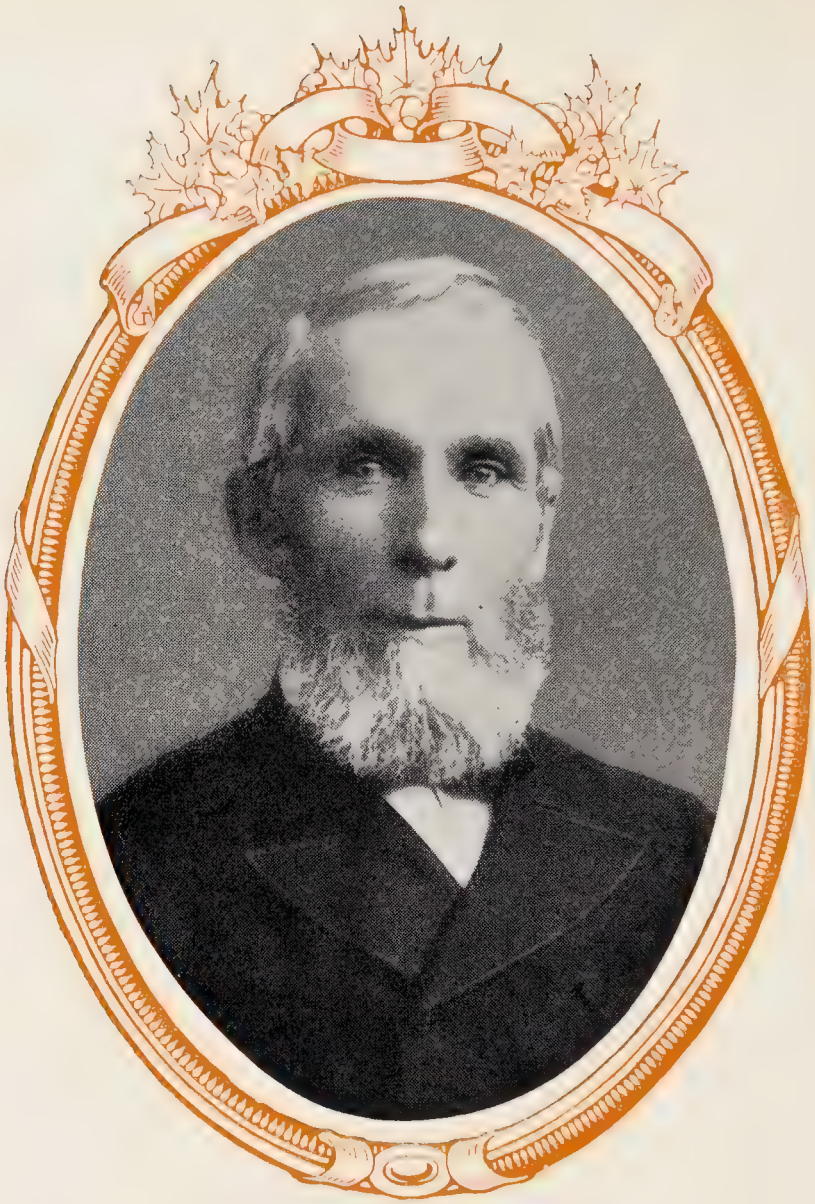
So with many a pang and many a doubt, we may be sure, he was forced to stand aside and let others lead the country toward the great victory.

The life of this splendid French-Canadian statesman was a great one. He was a leader of men both by reason of the power of his eloquence and the strength of his character; and not by strength alone did he lead, but by reason of the charm of his manner and the honesty of his purpose. He had few enemies, but his friends were numberless.

Numerous distinctions were conferred upon him at various periods of his eventful career. He was an Imperial Privy Councillor and a G.C.M.G. The Cobden Club awarded him their gold medal in recognition of his services to the cause of free trade; also he was a Grand Officer of the French Legion of Honour.

In the year 1919 he died at Ottawa, the Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier, P.C., G.C.M.G., seventy-eight years of age. And so passed a Great Statesman, a Great Man, and a Great Canadian.

Alexander Mackenzie



Alexander Mackenzie

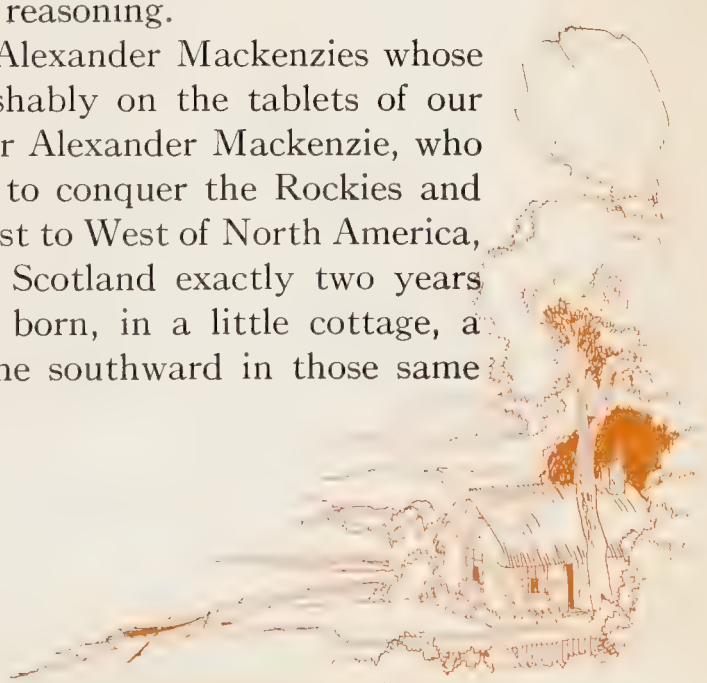
1822-1892

Alexander Mackenzie

EACH of the first two Prime Ministers of the Dominion hailed from Scotland; each spent his early Canadian days in Kingston, Ontario; each was a magnificent debater, and neither of the two was an orator of more than average ability. And there the resemblance between these great statesmen ends, for no two men of more divergent character can be found in Canadian history.

The first, John A. Macdonald, was a barrister-at-law; the second, Alexander Mackenzie, was a working stone-cutter. Macdonald was a Conservative; a lover of the jovial life, filled with the spirit of *bonhomie*, yet a master of affairs and of men whom he ruled with the aid of a quip and a smile and a pat on the back. Mackenzie was a Liberal; intensely religious, a pronounced Sabbatarian and prohibitionist, master of himself and master of his followers; yet kindly withal, and a man who ruled by reasoning.

There have been two Alexander Mackenzies whose names are carved imperishably on the tablets of our history. The explorer, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who was the first known man to conquer the Rockies and make the journey from East to West of North America, died in the Highlands of Scotland exactly two years before his namesake was born, in a little cottage, a hundred miles or so to the southward in those same Scottish Highlands.

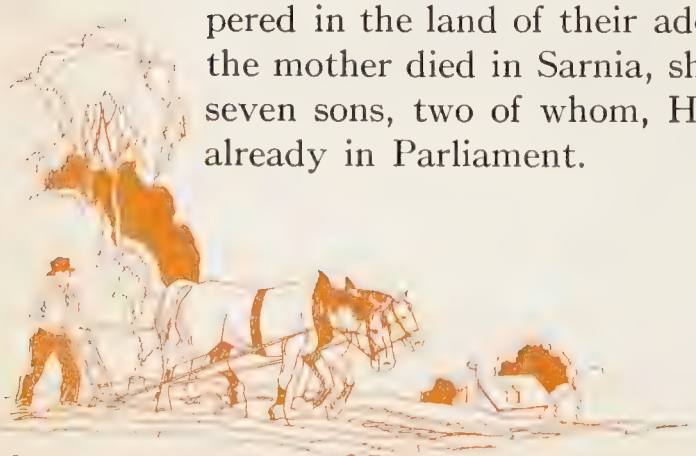


Mackenzie was born near the rivers Tay and Tummel

Alexander, the incipient stone mason and Prime Minister, was born in 1822 at Logierait, Perthshire. His father was a working carpenter and joiner, a man of great respectability and of more than the average intelligence. As an old Scottish writer puts it, he "was so well endowed with brains and information, and the gift of the tongue, that he was the oracle of the village, the life and soul of any social organizations which it had. His mother was a daughter of Mr. Fleming, long schoolmaster at Inver of Tullipourie, whose family talent, intelligence and refinement, raised them decidedly above the average of their peers."

Of the house in which he was born, Mackenzie left a pleasing description: "a stone cottage prettily situated near the confluence of the rivers Tay and Tummel —one of the most beautiful spots in the Southern Highlands, where, within a few miles of the ancient cathedral city of Dunkeld on the south, and the famous pass of Killiecrankie on the north, a rich cultivation in the broad valleys contrasts strongly with near mountain scenery, rendering the spot no less celebrated for natural beauty than it is for its historic recollections."

Alexander was born one of ten children, all sons, of whom seven reached maturity. Alexander, the third oldest, emigrated to Canada in 1842, six years after the death of his father. A year afterwards he was followed by his brother Hope, and four years after that by the remaining five brothers and their mother. All prospered in the land of their adoption, and when in 1861 the mother died in Sarnia, she was surrounded by her seven sons, two of whom, Hope and Alexander, were already in Parliament.



For a time he became a farmer

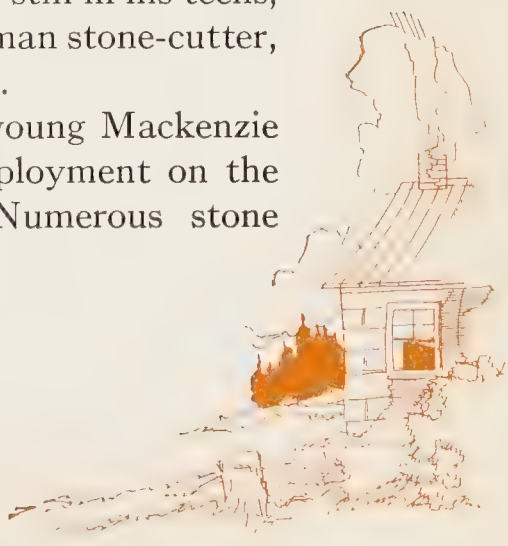
Alexander's education was plain perhaps, but so far as it extended, thorough. He attended the village school throughout the day, and at night he sat by his father's fireside and read the Bible and certain theological works, taking strong doses of the serious poets as a relaxation which, to that devout Highland household, must have appeared almost in the nature of intellectual frivolity.

So much for the winter months. During the summer, after the lad was ten years old, he spent his days and evenings working as herd boy on farms, thus contributing to his support. The village dominie saw him only during the weeks which intervened between the beginning of winter and the birth of spring.

At the age of thirteen he left school altogether and became a ploughman and full time farm worker. When he was sixteen, he was apprenticed to a stone-cutter, but throughout his apprenticeship he probably did other work. For when Alexander was fourteen years old, his father died, leaving a widow and seven children, whose ages ranged from two to seventeen years, to the tender mercy of the world, and the earning powers of three boys aged from fourteen to seventeen years.

Alexander had little time for anything save work—work for the sake of immediate money, and training-work in order that he might earn more money. So well did he succeed that, while he was still in his teens, he was serving his master as a journeyman stone-cutter, and earning a journeyman's full wage.

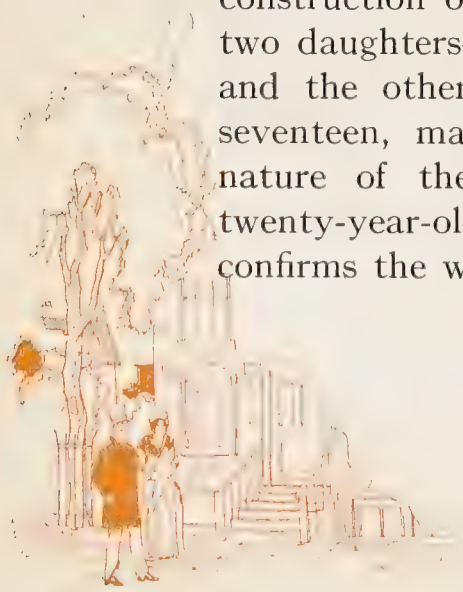
When he was nineteen years old, young Mackenzie left his native district and found employment on the new Ayr and Glasgow Railway. Numerous stone



bridges were being constructed, and Alexander was assigned to that one which spans the River Irvine. Here his life was easier; he was earning money and living the unfettered life of a journeyman mason. He took a great interest in the Chartist movement; attended their meetings—even joined in their discussions, but he never adopted the Chartist doctrine. He was a Radical, and a strong upholder of any movement which seemed to lead in the direction of reform—but he was never a Chartist.

At this time he began to regard religious matters with a serious and critical eye; he found much good in many denominations, but in some he found a certain aloofness. To him a coldness seemed apparent in the Scottish church of his ancestors. He had a profound respect and reverence towards all things Divine, and he examined and debated the differences in form and creed which existed in the various churches. The end of this theological turmoil was that he became a Baptist, and a Baptist he remained throughout his life.

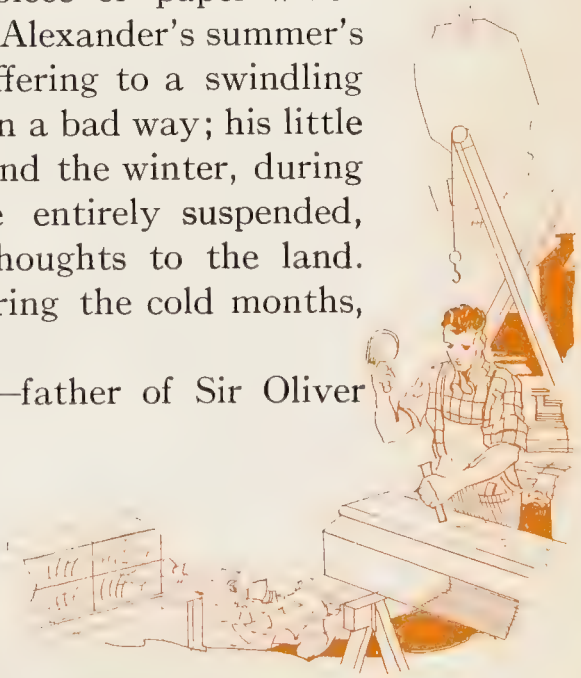
Another influence which affected his life in those early days of manhood was the friendship he enjoyed with a family named Neil. Two of the Neils—father and son—were stone-cutters, engaged as he was on the construction of railway bridges. Also the Neils had two daughters—one married to a man named Steed, and the other, a fair and dainty damsel of sweet seventeen, married to nobody. One can guess the nature of the attraction the Neil family held for twenty-year-old Alexander, and subsequent history confirms the wisdom of our insight.



Anyhow, when the Neils and the Steeds decided to emigrate to Canada, young Mackenzie decided to accompany them. They all sailed from Glasgow on the good ship *Monarch*, and passing through Quebec and Montreal, in due course arrived safely in the City of Kingston in Ontario.

The day after he arrived in Kingston, Alexander found employment as a stone-cutter, but to his chagrin discovered that Canadian stone was too tough for the soft tools he had brought from Scotland; his chisels made no impression on our hard limestone, and he possessed no money with which to purchase a new kit. So he sought other employment and found it with a builder who hired him at the rate of seven shillings a day. This builder paid his labourers in kind, that is to say in groceries and other goods from a store in which he was financially interested. As Alexander did not want groceries he had to be content with promises, for apparently the adventurous contractor had no money. Towards the end of the summer, rumours of the unsatisfactory financial position of his employer prompted Mackenzie to demand an immediate settlement. He received a promissory note, a piece of paper which proved to be of no value; so that Alexander's summer's work represented a gratuitous offering to a swindling contractor. Alexander was now in a bad way; his little stock of capital was exhausted, and the winter, during which building operations were entirely suspended, was at hand. He turned his thoughts to the land. Could he find employment, during the cold months, on the land?

A Mr. Mowat of Kingston—father of Sir Oliver



Mackenzie was a stone-cutter

Mowat, who at that time was studying law with John A. Macdonald in the same city—hearing of Alexander's plight, offered him a small farm at Loughborough, twenty-two miles away, and agreed to accept payment when payment could be made. Young Mackenzie was delighted. He accepted the offer with gratitude and enthusiasm. Thereafter he held the elder Mowat in high esteem and friendship—a sentiment, after many years, he was able to transfer to his benefactor's famous son.

The farm at Loughborough had a clearing of two acres and contained one log hut with a wooden shanty leaning against it—a small oasis in a desert of close timber. Here, in company with the Neil family and the Steeds, Mackenzie spent his first winter in Canada. It was by no means an unpleasant experience. During the day the men worked in the forest—they cleared seven or eight acres of timber—and at night they all sat round the great blazing fire of logs, and read aloud to each other from books of a serious nature; afterwards these books were discussed and criticized. It was a kind of a family mutual improvement society, but it afforded recreation which all of them enjoyed.

During those delightful evenings they read many of the poets, especially Shakespeare; several books of history and philosophy, and of course theology and the Bible. Steed, the husband of the elder Miss Neil, was a widely read man, a scholar and an idealist, who practised the trade of ship's carpenter. No doubt he acted the part of guide, philosopher and friend during those wonderful fireside gatherings.

In the spring Alexander returned to Kingston and

immediately found lucrative employment. Apparently he had found the necessary capital with which to purchase a new outfit of tools, for we find him back at his old trade of stone-cutting. Soon he was able to set up as a contractor in a small way; for instance he built a bomb-proof arch at Fort Henry, as well as undertaking other official work during the season. This was in the year 1843, and it was particularly memorable since it was during that year that his brother Hope joined him. Alexander considered his prospects sufficiently promising to induce his elder brother to take this important step of adventuring in a new country.

The next ten years of Mackenzie's life are mainly concerned with business expansion; he worked in many places—the Beauharnois Canal and the Welland Canal, for instance—and rose to the position of a recognized building contractor. On March 25th, 1845, he married Helen Neil, who had reached the interesting age of twenty; Alexander was an elderly young man of twenty-three.

Meanwhile Hope Mackenzie and Steed had established a prosperous ship-building yard at Sarnia. In those days of impossible roads, land travel was difficult and tedious, so that there existed a great demand for lake craft; the building of ships was thus a thriving industry. At Sarnia Neil and his family also settled, and during 1847 the little community was increased by Alexander and his wife. In the same year Hope returned to Scotland to bring to Canada the other members of the family, so that the spring of 1848 found in Sarnia a colony of the Mackenzies, Steeds and Neils.

The families prospered and became people of local importance. Alexander engaged in many building contracts; he built the Sarnia Court House, the gaol and many other structures in the district. His life was saddened in 1852 by the death of his Scottish sweetheart-wife, Helen, who succumbed to an ailment caused, according to her husband, by the negligence of a medical man who attended her while he was under the influence of drink.

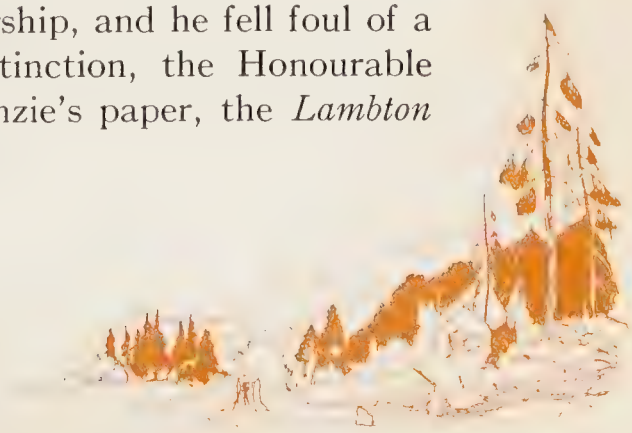
It was during the early Fifties that Alexander Mackenzie began to take active interest in political work. He had long had a local reputation as a debater, a local preacher, and a man ready at any time to stand up and talk on any subject. Like his father he had a ready tongue. The budding politician was a Radical and a dreamer; the advanced theories of William Lyon Mackenzie attracted his youthful ardour, and though he was never closely associated with the violent little reformer of Toronto, the correspondence which passed between the two men testifies to their unity of thought. Even this distant friendship with the agitator caused Alexander some inconvenience. Nearly thirty years after William Lyon Mackenzie's type and printing presses had been disturbed in Toronto, Alexander Mackenzie suffered the destruction of certain stone work he was engaged upon in his own town of Sarnia, because of his known sympathy with the little agitator. But Alexander was never a revolutionary; he was, like Baldwin and Brown, a peaceful reformer. Wisely, therefore, he attached himself to George Brown, then one of the leading members of the several parties of differing nomenclature, which were united in opposition of the

A typical old-time farm house

Conservative Party. Brown was attempting to gather around him a coherent and cohesive party; a group of followers to whom some facetious person—probably not the leader himself—had given the quaint, if incongruous, title of "Brownies." Naturally the Toronto newspaper editor was glad to enlist the service of Mackenzie. The two men corresponded and they met; from the moment of the first meeting Mackenzie gave to George Brown an unquestioning allegiance. The big Liberal Leader became the future Prime Minister's ideal man, as well as his political idol. Throughout the lives of those two men it is not too much to say that the friendship which existed between them, warmly personal though it was, was the friendship of the master and the disciple, and Mackenzie was the disciple.

In support of Brown and his flock of "Brownies" a newspaper was established in Sarnia in the early days of 1852. Mackenzie assumed the editorship of this sheet and proved himself a capable journalist of the mid-Victorian, partisan fighting type—not of the kind vindictive or vituperative toward a political opponent merely because he was a political opponent. In those days local sheets printed scandalous paragraphs, the more vulgar because blanks were used in place of names—names obvious to the reader as those of the people it was the writer's intention to wound. Those were days of local newspapers at their worst.

Alexander Mackenzie was above such vile methods of achieving the scurrilous; but he edited the paper in the existing fashion of editorship, and he fell foul of a local politician of some distinction, the Honourable Malcolm Cameron. Mackenzie's paper, the *Lambton*

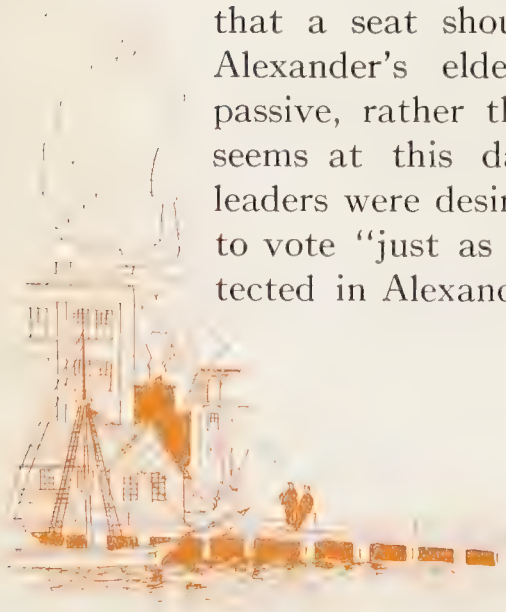


Shield, apparently accused Cameron, though his name was veiled in a fog of evasive sentences, of corrupt political practices. In the libel action which followed, the *Lambton Shield* lost the case and was ordered to pay twenty pounds and costs. Naturally the costs were heavier than the fine, and the total expenses to Mr. Editor Mackenzie represented a sum of about one hundred and fifty pounds. This amount exhausted the financial strength of the *Shield*, and the paper died, as most papers die, of financial inertia. Mackenzie paid the money out of his own pocket, and in a valedictory notice, wrote of the libel action as "a part of the political history of Canada . . . malice was no part of our motive, and infamy is no portion of our punishment, but we suffer pecuniarily for our outspokenness."

Though sentiments and sentences such as these were common in the Victorian Fifties, it was probably a splendid thing for Mackenzie that his *Shield* died an early death.

Meanwhile our hero had been accomplishing more useful work for the party of his adoption. He had for some time acted as an organizing agent for George Brown, and had been successful, as his election agent, in obtaining his leader's return for Kent and Lambton.

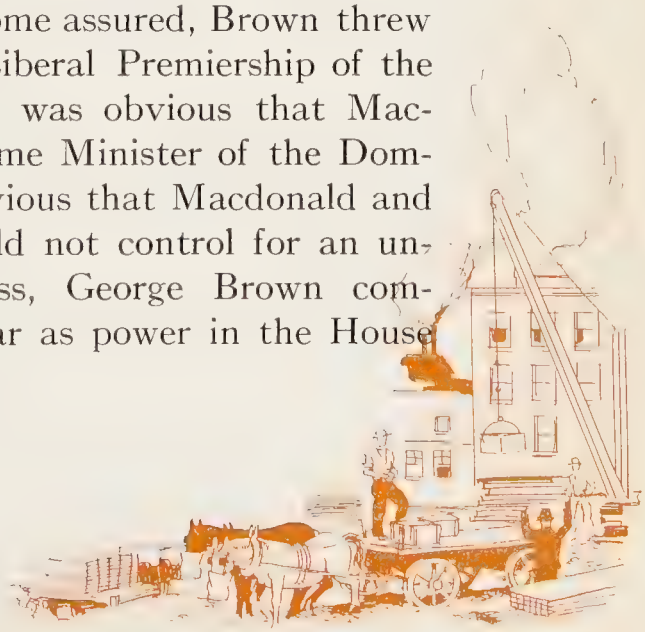
In the election of 1854, the Liberal Party decided that a seat should be found for Hope Mackenzie, Alexander's elder brother. This selection of the passive, rather than the active, political Mackenzie, seems at this date incomprehensible; probably the leaders were desirous of possessing a following willing to vote "just as their leaders tell them to," and detected in Alexander a latent quality of independence.



It was not until 1861 that he was returned to the Provincial House. His brother had temporarily retired and Alexander was returned for Lambton by the handsome majority of 141, in spite of the strong opposition of a rather distinguished ministerialist.

From this period politics occupied practically the whole of his life. From 1861 until 1892 he was a member of either the Provincial or the Dominion House —for a short period, while such absurdity was legal, he was member of both Houses.

Alexander Mackenzie's political life was solid and honest and masterful, but it cannot be described as spectacularly brilliant. His rapid advance to leadership owed something to the accident of circumstance, as well as to his own ability. The abysmal enmity which existed between George Brown and Sir John A. Macdonald had some effect on Mackenzie's rapid promotion, as did the indifference of at least one of the most brilliant of the Liberal Party. Brown not only renounced a probable period of power on the occasion when he so generously gave his hand to the enemy, and made Confederation possible, but on another occasion he renounced an even more certain probability of greater power. When he resigned from the Coalition Cabinet after Confederation had become assured, Brown threw away the certainty of the Liberal Premiership of the Dominion. At that time it was obvious that Macdonald must be the first Prime Minister of the Dominion, but it was equally obvious that Macdonald and the Conservative Party could not control for an unlimited period. Nevertheless, George Brown committed political suicide so far as power in the House



Mackenzie became a recognized building contractor

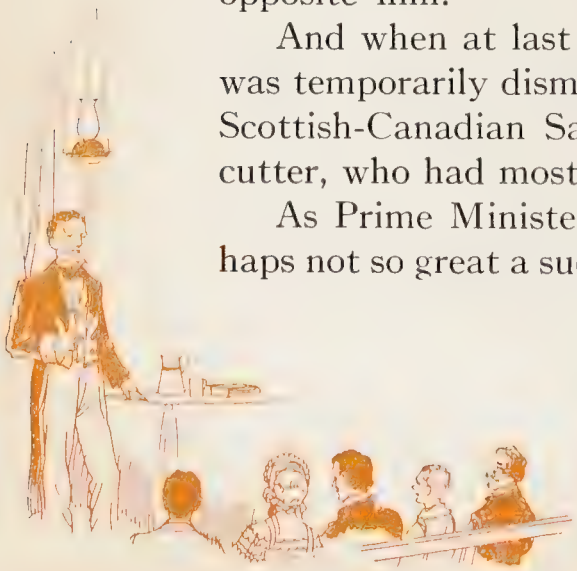
was concerned, though probably he was perfectly satisfied with the power he maintained through the medium of his *Globe* newspaper.

After his retirement Brown stood by his disciple, Mackenzie, pushed him forward and guided him—when he needed guidance. But the younger man quickly proved his merit. He spoke often in the House and he never spoke too long. As a debater he quickly came to the front. People who sat opposite him began to fear him; men of his own party began to rely upon him. He obtained a reputation for honesty of purpose and became known as the "Stainless Statesman." He fought his way upward towards leadership without any thought that leadership was his goal. He simply did his best to the utmost of his power; and reward came to him. Men far more brilliant than he gave place to him, and at last he found himself in power—a leader, recognized within and without the House. Confederation he first regarded with a certain suspicion, and then, converted, he adopted and preached the doctrine of Union with all his might.

He was the Liberal Leader of the House when it first opened as the Dominion House of Commons, and Sir John A. Macdonald never made the mistake of discounting the strength and ability of the man who sat opposite him.

And when at last the brilliant Conservative Leader was temporarily dismissed from power, it was the dour Scottish-Canadian Sabbatarian, prohibitionist, stonecutter, who had most to do with his downfall.

As Prime Minister, Alexander Mackenzie was perhaps not so great a success as he had been as the Leader



Mackenzie became a prominent local personage

of the Opposition. His genius was that of a critic rather than that of a creator; probably the greatest acts of constructive statesmanship achieved by his Government were the establishment of the Supreme Court of Canada, and the provision made for simultaneous voting in elections. His Government remained in power until 1878, when John A. Macdonald in his turn acted as the dismissal officer, and snatched the reins of power from his old antagonist.

For the two following years Mackenzie acted as Opposition Leader and then, in 1880, his health failing, he resigned his place in favour of Blake, who in turn eventually gave way to Wilfrid Laurier. But, as a private member, Alexander Mackenzie remained in the House until 1892.

His brilliant successor, Laurier, described him as having been "as straight and solid as his own masonry . . . a thorough-going party man. Not that he would for an instant countenance any tricky or underhand 'practical' politics; he was too unswervingly honest for that . . . but he was certain that the Tories had inherited most of Adam's original sin, and he usually had the facts at his finger ends to prove it. We never had a better debater in the House . . . He made an excellent administrator . . . He had not the imagination nor the breadth of view required to lead a party or a country . . . But it would be well if we had more Mackenzies in public life."

On Sunday, the 17th of April, 1892, Alexander Mackenzie died, aged seventy years—three score years and ten. And most of those seventy years which constitute the number biblically allotted to the normal

human, this man devoted to the welfare of his country. A good man, and a strong man; great in effort and in accomplishment. Working without thought of power or of reward; so unobtrusive that thrice he declined the honour of Knighthood, so simple that he never forgot that little Alexander Mackenzie who in the old days herded cattle for humble Perthshire farmers—he came to his end in the perfect knowledge of a splendid life lived perfectly. So died our "Stainless Statesman" —a Great Canadian.

Sir James Whitney

Sir James Whitney

1843-1914

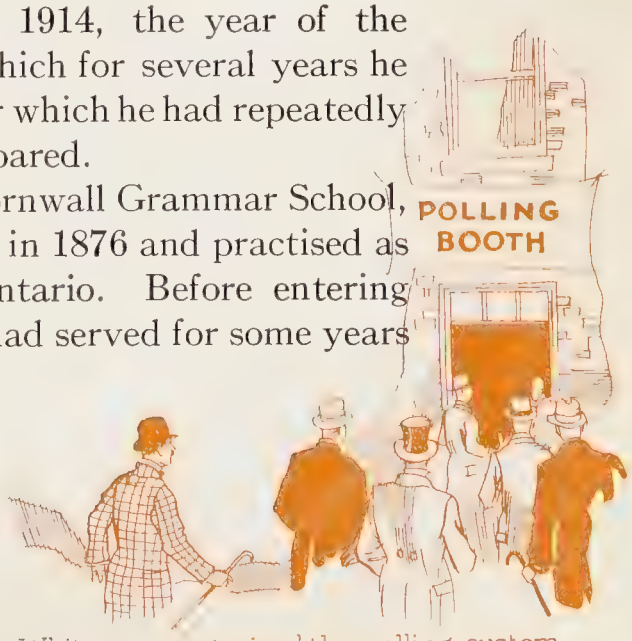
Sir James Whitney

THE name James Pliny Whitney, because of the rugged splendour of the character of the man, and the worth of his achievements as a distinguished Canadian, deserves a place on the biographical shelves of our public and private libraries. Possibly, the omission of such a volume will some day be remedied by a writer with a first hand knowledge of one of the most interesting of Ontario's Prime Ministers.

In the prevailing dearth of Whitney literature, the stranger and the younger generation would find it difficult to procure any impression of the character and work of a man, so recently at the head of Ontario, were it not for the *Reminiscences* of Sir John Willison, and the *Candid Chronicles* of Hector Charlesworth. These two distinguished authors and publicists, whose works are invaluable to students of Canadian history, save Sir James Whitney from the oblivion of unrecorded greatness.

James Pliny Whitney was born at Williamsburg, Ontario, in 1843; he died in 1914, the year of the outbreak of the Great War which for several years he had believed inevitable, and for which he had repeatedly warned his country to be prepared.

Educated at the famous Cornwall Grammar School, Whitney was called to the Bar in 1876 and practised as a barrister at Morrisburg, Ontario. Before entering the legal profession, Whitney had served for some years

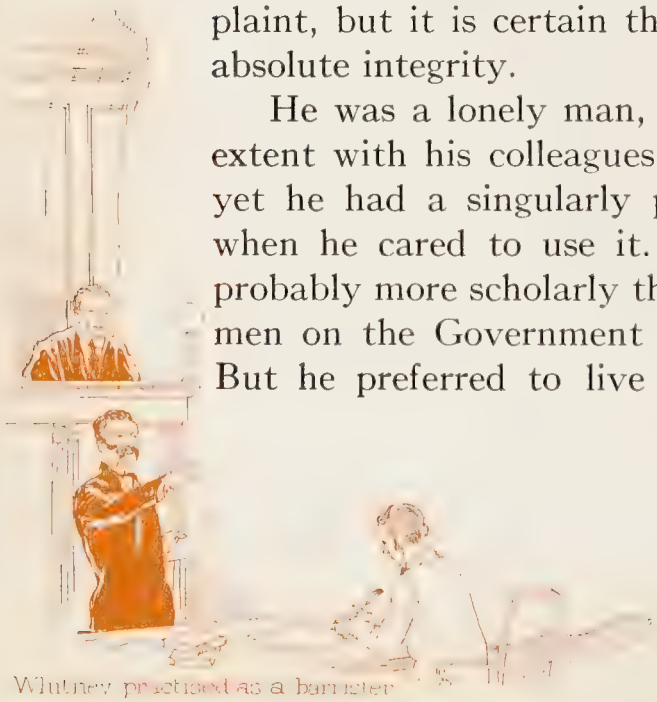


Whitney reorganized the polling system

in the militia, and had been on continuous active service during the Fenian Raid of 1866. In 1888 he was elected by Dundas County to the Ontario Assembly, and within eight years he became leader of the Conservative Party in Ontario. In 1905 he became Premier of the Province.

Apparently he was not a brilliant man in the sense that John A. Macdonald or Laurier were brilliant men, for the Ontario Premier was neither a silver-tongued orator or a master of men or of organizations. His chief strength rested in his transparent honesty, and his unswerving devotion to the public affairs of his province and his country. For many years—even after he was recognized as the leader of the Ontario Conservatives—he was not popular with the rank and file of his own party, or with the mass of Liberals, or, so far as can be gathered, with any considerable portion of the electorate. He was a sort of political ugly duckling, destined to blossom to the swan stage after an impossibly long period of misunderstanding. Again and again he complained that his colleagues denied that he possessed talent, or even honesty; in regard to the talent he was possibly more or less correct in this complaint, but it is certain that no one ever doubted his absolute integrity.

He was a lonely man, not given to mixing to any extent with his colleagues at private social functions, yet he had a singularly prepossessing social manner when he cared to use it. He was a scholarly man, probably more scholarly than any of the more brilliant men on the Government benches whom he opposed. But he preferred to live in a little provincial town,



Whitney practised as a barrister

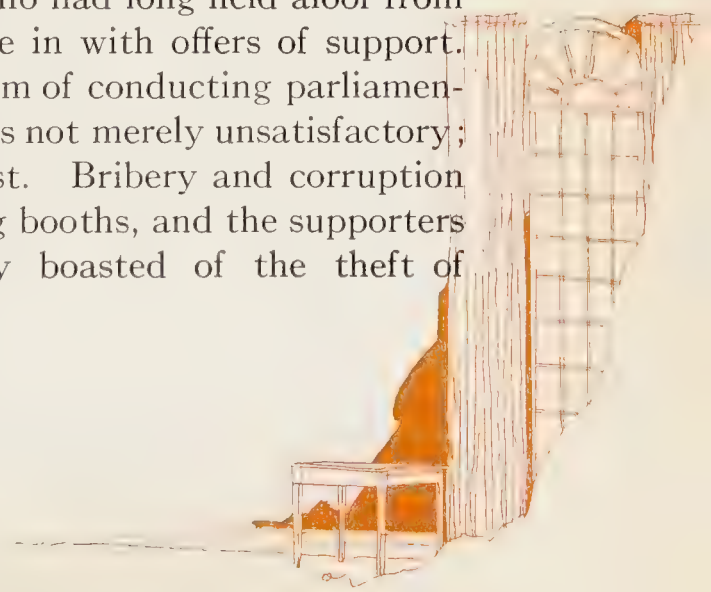
between the sessions of the Legislature, rather than take his place in the social life of the Capital.

When he first became Conservative Leader in 1896, the Honourable Arthur Sturgis Hardy had just succeeded Mowat as the Liberal Premier. Hardy was a close personal friend of Whitney, and it is characteristic of the Opposition Leader that he should have remarked, three years after, when Hardy retired: "I never had the heart to really fight Arthur Hardy, but now I'm going in to win."

Hardy was succeeded in the premiership by Sir George Ross, a man of strong personality and brilliant speech, but the old ascendency of the Liberal Party which had dominated Ontario for thirty years, began to show signs of weakening. Their majority in the House was reduced to seven, and their existence in power was controlled by the Farmer's Party, known in those days as the "Patrons of Industry." It is on record that Laurier urged Ross to appeal to the electorate, when his Government began to wobble, but the brilliant Ontario leader hung on to office—as history shows, too long for the ultimate good of his party.

Whitney had astonished the province and his own party by reducing the Liberal majority to an insignificant seven. The newspapers began to take notice, and influential Conservatives who had long held aloof from their leader, began to come in with offers of support.

At this period the system of conducting parliamentary elections in Ontario was not merely unsatisfactory; it was grotesquely dishonest. Bribery and corruption were rampant at the polling booths, and the supporters of elected members openly boasted of the theft of



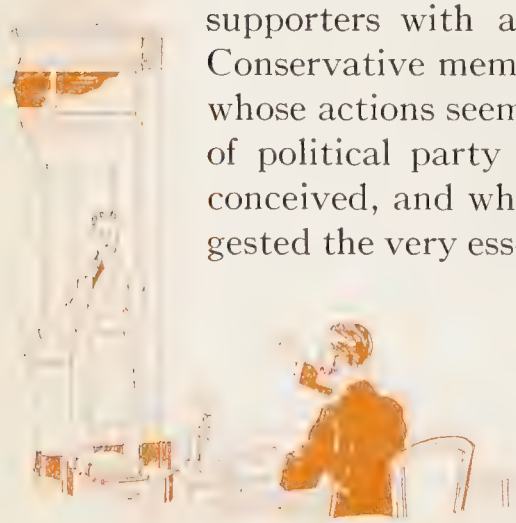
complete ballot boxes. Whitney began a campaign for the abolition of these methods; he claimed that the members of the Government had not been elected by the people; he charged and proved corruption, and he preached the doctrine of honesty.

Meanwhile, Ross, despairing at last of maintaining power, proposed to Whitney a coalition government. This the Conservative Leader refused to consider, and in the election which followed he was returned to power, supported by a substantial majority.

In his later years as Leader of the Opposition, Whitney had displayed in his speeches a certain intolerance and irascibility. This was probably due to his consciousness of lack of support from his followers, and the knowledge that the corrupt practices at the polling stations kept him out of power.

As soon as he became Premier, his followers recognized his worth and gave him an increased measure of that support which was his due. But still he could not achieve affection; respect, yes, but not affection. His manner with the ministers in his cabinet was frequently exasperating. He wanted to do everything himself; he was too interfering in his methods.

It was a common saying in the House, "there is no question as to who is the boss." Not only did he autocratically control his cabinet, but also he held his supporters with a rein so tight that many admirable Conservative members became restive. He was a man whose actions seemed always paradoxical, whose choice of political party seemed to have been paradoxically conceived, and whose complete mental equipment suggested the very essence of paradoxicalness. Yet he was

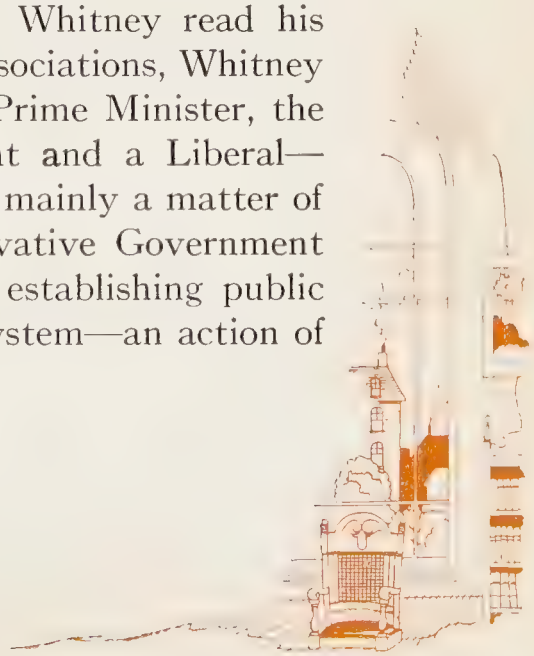


"Stop!" the Prime Minister would roar

known for his unyielding integrity and famous for his simple honesty. His manners were brusque almost to the point of rudeness, his sarcasm was of the kind which is frequently sardonic, and the quality he possessed which he described as "bluntness," frequently became boorishness; yet all these unpleasant traits merely represented curtains hiding a kind, chivalrous and generous nature.

Whitney would receive a candidate asking for a simple favour, listen to his request, and then snarl at the applicant in the most ferocious manner. Thoroughly cowed, or enraged, according to his character, the visitor would rise and walk to the door; "Stop," the Prime Minister would roar, and the amazed and outraged applicant would find the Prime Minister all smiles, and his favour granted in a most gracious manner. This may be merely an example of Whitney's idea of humour—a father frequently scowls in pretense when about to confer some signal favour on his son—but the system tended to alienate from the Prime Minister a considerable amount of affection.

In the matter of the choice of the Conservative Party as the medium for his political activities, this was possibly due to the accident that it was in the office of John Sandfield Macdonald that Whitney read his law. By heredity, and by home associations, Whitney was a Liberal. When he became Prime Minister, the difference between his Government and a Liberal—even a Socialist Government—was mainly a matter of nomenclature. It was his Conservative Government that passed into law the measure establishing public ownership of the Ontario Hydro System—an action of



stupendous importance, but of an ultra socialistic nature. In the passing of that Act, many of his most bitter critics were to be found among the Conservatives who sat beside him or behind him in the House.

But his gesture in allowing his association with Sandfield Macdonald to influence his choice of political party was due to no influence of an older or a stronger man upon a younger or a weaker man; no one ever influenced Whitney in that manner. Really it represented an act of fine chivalry on the part of the young lawyer. He saw his late chief, then Prime Minister of Ontario, suddenly assailed by the united power of the Liberal Party. George Brown, Alexander Mackenzie, Edward Blake, and a host of others, suddenly sprung at Sandfield Macdonald's political throat, and the odds against the Premier seemed overwhelming—as in fact they proved to be. Whitney rushed to the aid of his chief, threw himself into the battle of speeches—and so found himself, naturally and irrevocably, a member of the Conservative Party.

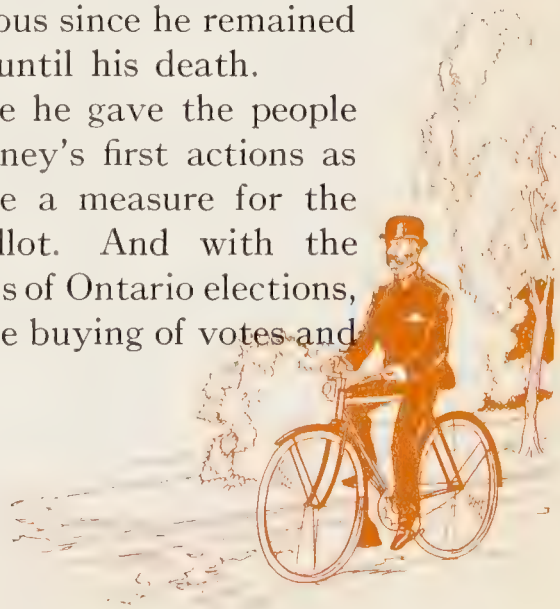
It was shortly after this that Whitney joined the House as Conservative member for Dundas County. But throughout his career he was undoubtedly sustained, financially and otherwise, by the affection and loyalty of his brother, E. C. Whitney of Ottawa, who was a life-long Liberal. This excellent brother was a man of great wealth—he was generous in his gifts to the University of Toronto—and it was in a measure due to his financial support that James Pliny Whitney was able to maintain that granite-like strength of purpose, and indifference to opinion, which is perhaps more difficult in the case of public men, who are also

family men, dependent upon the emolument of office for the upkeep of their homes.

So that Whitney seems to have been a Liberal who became a Conservative more or less by the accident of a chivalrous action, and who, though a Conservative, found his chief supporter in a Liberal. We have seen that in opposition Whitney was frequently an irascible and intolerant speaker, and that when he became Prime Minister his manner to his ministers and followers was frequently exasperating. This would have been impossible had not his financial independence been assured; there is small opportunity for a man to assume the pose of an autocratic leader if he has to ask his bank manager for favours.

Whitney accepted office as Prime Minister absolutely free of obligation to any man save those obligations due to merit and proper service; subject to the rules of political sanity he was free to choose his cabinet according to the caprice of his intelligence and the dictates of his desire. But this selection was naturally a difficult matter in his case since the Conservative power had been in such complete subjection for so long a period that the number of experienced men available for preferment was extremely limited. That he succeeded in his difficult task is obvious since he remained in office for nine years—in fact until his death.

In accordance with the pledge he gave the people during the election, one of Whitney's first actions as Prime Minister was to introduce a measure for the abolition of the numbered ballot. And with the passing of this Act the old scandals of Ontario elections, the bribery and the corruption, the buying of votes and

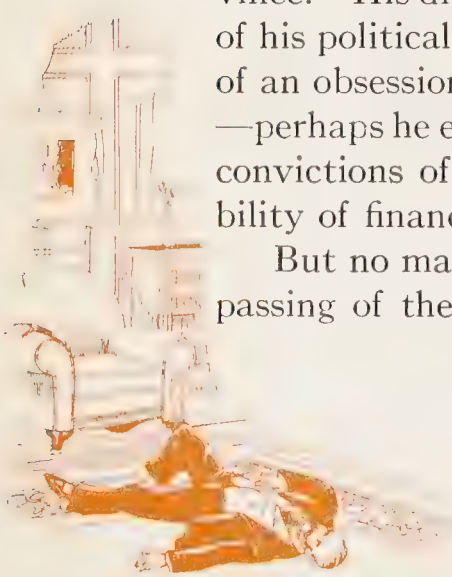


Whitney's hobby was cycling

the intimidation of voters—all these affairs and actions of unsavoury memory were swept out of existence. The polling system was made clean and honest and efficient, and so it remains to this day.

The relative merits of the various achievements of Whitney's Government differ perhaps according to the political outlook of the student. Probably the outstanding measure born during his jurisdiction was the establishment of the Ontario Hydro System, an achievement almost entirely of Whitney's authorship. Beck was the tireless agitator gathering support for the acceptance of the bill, and, as we all know, the genius who eventually brought the Hydro System to a condition of splendid efficiency; but it was Whitney who passed the Act. Various publicists have affirmed that in this matter the powerful personality of Adam Beck dominated the Premier; that he mesmerized Whitney into supporting the measure. But this is probably an inaccurate interpretation. It is far more likely—as other writers have suggested—that Whitney's chief reason for supporting public ownership in regard to this vast power system was due to his intense disgust of the campaign methods employed by the powerful private monopolies then in existence within the province. His dread of the power of bribery at that period of his political life must have been almost in the nature of an obsession. He risked the loyalty of his followers—perhaps he even suppressed certain cherished political convictions of his own—in order to abolish the possibility of financial corruption among political agents.

But no matter what the reason may have been, the passing of the Act must rank as the largest—and the



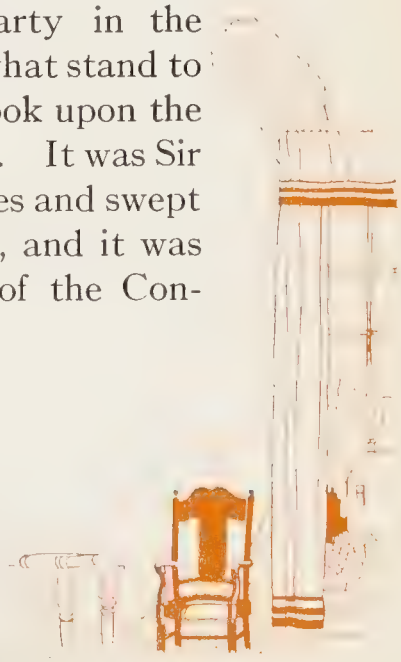
He fell over dead

most amazing—of the accomplishments of Whitney as Prime Minister.

His Government also did excellent work in connection with the University and the Public and the High Schools, which had been allowed to drift into a very indifferent financial condition. Whitney's Government re-organized the system of these institutions and succeeded in placing them on a greatly improved financial basis. Since the Prime Minister was not himself a graduate of the University, his interest in this element of his Government's educational system of reform redounds the more to his credit; the authorities themselves gave expression to their appreciation of his efforts on their behalf in conferring upon him the degrees of D.C.L. and LL.D.

It was during Whitney's reign at the Parliament Buildings that the famous programme for prison reform was introduced by the Hon. W. J. Hanna, as were the measures providing for the sale of timber and pulpwood by tender sold at public auction.

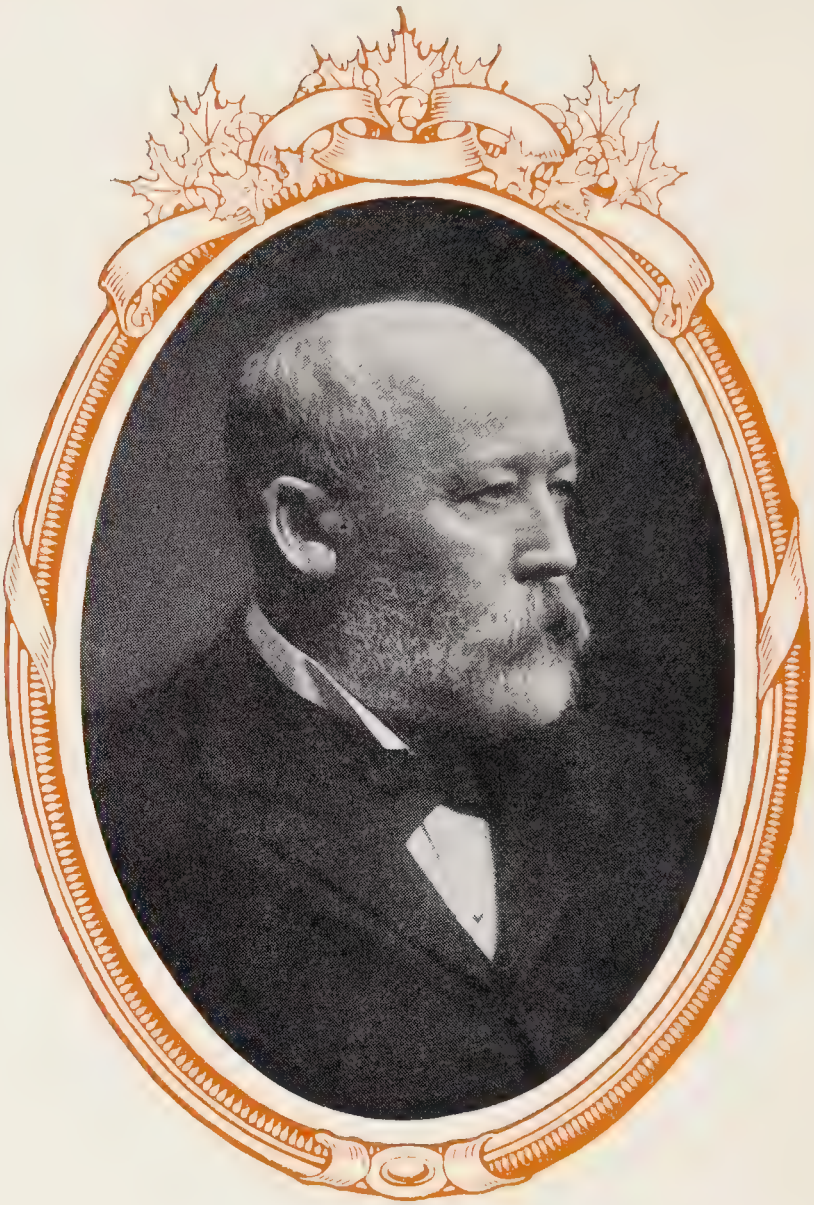
At least one action of international importance must be placed to the credit of this dour man of strength and diligence. Following the announcement made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier of the proposed reciprocity treaty with the United States, the Conservative Party in the Dominion House was in a quandary as to what stand to take. There was a general disposition to look upon the suggestion as a fair commercial proposition. It was Sir James Whitney who led the opposition forces and swept Ontario clean of pro-reciprocity advocates, and it was this action that stiffened the opposition of the Conservative leaders in the Ottawa House.



Whitney was a great Imperialist; no greater Imperialist ever existed. He advocated Imperial unity; he even advocated important contributions in ships by the Dominions to the Imperial Navy. He foresaw the Great War; he realized that the immense conflagration was inevitable, and ceaselessly he warned the Province and the Dominion to be prepared. And he died just as the great guns had begun to roar, and the people of Ontario had commenced the initial stages of their heroic participation in the titanic struggle. He passed into the great beyond, with unexpected suddenness, on September 25th, 1914. Pacing a room in his house in St. George Street, Toronto, preparing his mind for a cabinet council he was about to attend, he suddenly fell; and he was dead.

Various contemporaries have compared his character to that of Sir Charles Tupper; others have said he was like Sir John Thompson; but there is no doubt that most of all he resembled James Whitney. He occupies a place of his own in history, and his character was his own, incapable of comparison. Gruff and bluff, yet really a genial man; strong and immovable as granite, yet at times tender as a woman; not brilliant, yet capable of great accomplishment; always honest, fearlessly honest, and so simple withal that apart from reading books his only hobby was that of riding a bicycle. Such a man was this great Prime Minister. He died with honour, in harness, Prime Minister of Ontario, Sir James Pliny Whitney, K.C.M.G., D.C.L., LL.D., K.C. A Great Canadian.

Two Builders of the C.P.R.



Sir William Van Horne

1843-1915

Lord Shaughnessy

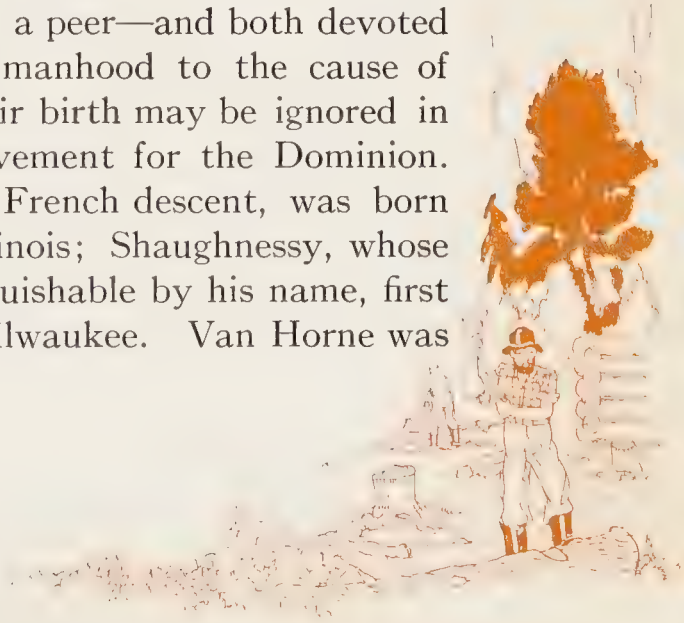
1853-1923

Two Builders of the C.P.R.

Sir William Van Horne and Lord Shaughnessy

THE credit for creating the C.P.R. is honourably shared by a number of distinguished Canadians. Some particulars of the lives of a few of these men appear in other chapters of *Great Men of Canada*. Pre-eminently, John A. Macdonald and Charles Tupper were the statesmen who supported the financiers Strathcona and Mountstephen; and Sandford Fleming was the pioneer engineer-explorer who first surveyed its route from coast to coast.

But two other men were largely responsible for the actual building of the line, for the laying of the rails and the practical construction of the system—Van Horne and Shaughnessy. Because neither of these two splendid men was born in Canada, or any part of the Empire, objection may be taken to the inclusion of their biographies in this volume. But since each of them received from the King the honour of knighthood—one being also made a peer—and both devoted the chief energies of their manhood to the cause of Canada, the locality of their birth may be ignored in the splendour of their achievement for the Dominion. Van Horne, of Dutch and French descent, was born at Chelsea, Will County, Illinois; Shaughnessy, whose ancestry is obviously distinguishable by his name, first saw the light of day in Milwaukee. Van Horne was



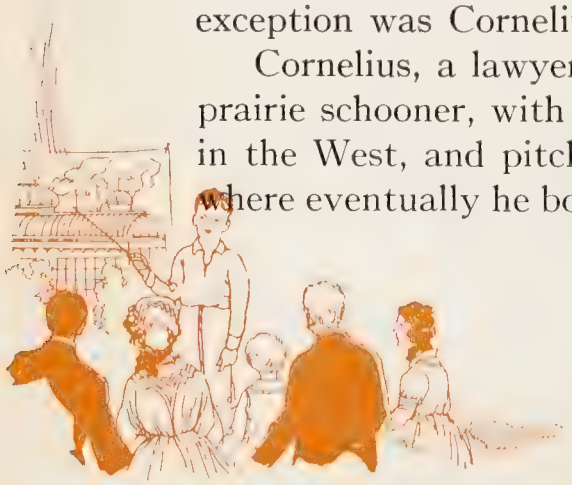
His father built a log hut

the driving power, the man of relentless energy, the great leader of men, and yet the splendid dreamer of splendid dreams; Shaughnessy was the man of method. Van Horne created the system; Shaughnessy helped in this work, and afterwards made the system perfect. Neither of these two men could have done anything in regard to the C.P.R. without Mountstephen and Strathcona, and these two financiers and administrators in their turn could have done nothing without John A. Macdonald and Tupper.

Van Horne was one of the most romantic men ever known on the American continent; his early life was similar to that of Lincoln; his working life resulted in achievement unexcelled by any other man born in such disadvantage of poverty. Van Horne died an English Knight, a man of immense wealth, an artist in colour and black and white of great merit, a designer of exquisite furniture, a collector of rare discrimination, and a geologist of distinction and wide repute.

The Van Horne family have lived on this continent since 1635. William, the subject of this study, was the direct descendant of that Jan Cornelissen Van Horne, who left the Zuyder Zee during the period of the Dutch Republic to seek fortune and adventure in New Amsterdam, the rising colony on Manhattan Island. All the descendants of that Van Horne had been wealthy citizens—all with one exception; and that exception was Cornelius, Sir William's father.

Cornelius, a lawyer, left the comfortable East in a prairie schooner, with a young family, to seek fortune in the West, and pitched his tent at Chelsea, Illinois, where eventually he bought land and built his log hut.

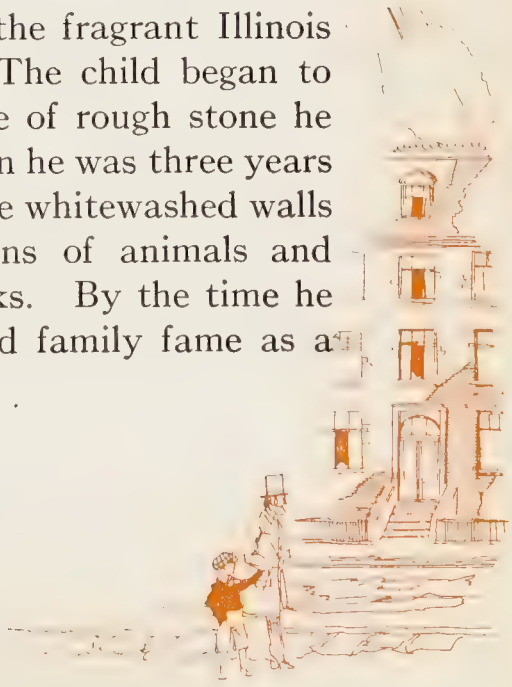


He gave shows of this artistic enormity

In those days this district was in the wilds; there was no legal work for miles round, and Cornelius was a very poor farmer. He moved to Joliet, Illinois, where, in 1854, he died suddenly of cholera.

Mr. Walter Vaughan, in *The Life and Work of Sir William Van Horne*, is able to publish a letter, written by Sir William to his grandson in 1914, in which is depicted the effect this tragic death of the bread winner had on the little family in Joliet. "My father died when I was eleven years old, leaving a good name and a lot of accounts payable and some bad accounts receivable. He was a lawyer who seldom took fees. I can remember him refusing payment for services not once but many times, when I felt sure that he had not a penny in his pocket. . . However, there we were at his death with nothing—my mother, and my two brothers and two sisters, all younger than I. My mother was a noble woman, courageous and resourceful, and she managed to find bread—seldom butter—and to keep us at school until I was able to earn something—which I had to set about at fourteen."

William was born in 1843, and it was not until the family moved to Joliet in 1851 that he was able to attend school. The first eight years of his life were spent in glorious freedom amidst the fragrant Illinois wilderness surrounding Chelsea. The child began to draw on an old slate, with a piece of rough stone he had picked from the river side, when he was three years old. At four he was decorating the whitewashed walls of the family log hut with designs of animals and humans executed in coloured chalks. By the time he was eight he had already achieved family fame as a



caricaturist and a designer. Also he had begun to make a collection of pebbles and pretty stones.

When he went to the town school at Joliet—the place boasted but one such establishment—he began to read. It is on record that he was an apt scholar, lacking in diligence—prone to dream away his hours rather than apply himself to the allotted task. Out of school he spent his time with books, or in exploring the countryside in search of pretty stones or strange pieces of rock. His art work was not neglected, and his fatal gift of caricature frequently got him into trouble with his schoolmaster, who was often the subject of William's facile pencil.

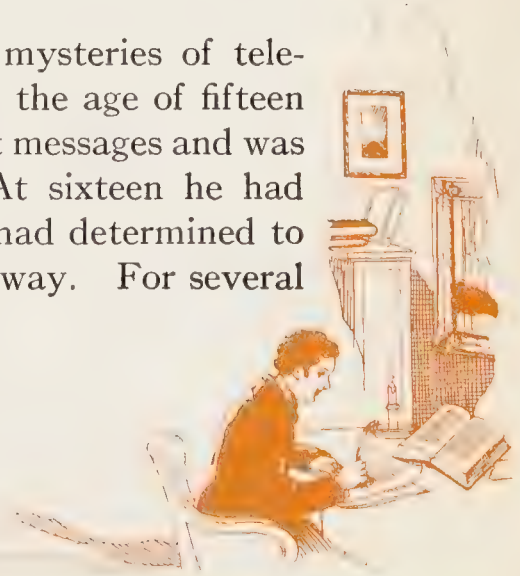
The boy never received an art lesson in his life; he learned to draw by copying the illustrations in old numbers of magazines, yet at the age of thirteen he made a gigantic sketch of the Crystal Palace, with panoramic views of London in the distance. This he executed on the back of a large strip of wall paper, and nailed each end on a blind-roller; the ingenious contrivance could, with the aid of two assistants, be slowly moved from side to side, producing a panoramic effect in the accepted fashion. He gave shows of this artistic enormity in a tent in the village, charging one penny admission. It is on record that so many adults patronized the show that he was able to increase the entrance fee.

Even before he left school young William had already begun to earn small sums of money with which to assist his widowed mother. She eked out the barest existence by means of her clever needle and an assiduous attention to a small vegetable patch. The Crystal

Palace panorama proving but a slender source of income, William earned a few pennies every week by acting as a telegraph messenger. This official connection with the telegraph office brought the boy in contact with the telegraphists and fired his imagination with an ambition to master the mystery of the dots and dashes. He was a boy with an immense capacity for work; this is evidenced by an incident which occurred during his school days. He borrowed from a friend a copy of Hitchcock's *Elements of Geology*. This book fascinated the boy, and of all things he desired to possess a copy of the volume. Such a purchase was far beyond the limit of his pocket, so the lad settled down, and night after night, after school hours and when there were no more telegrams to deliver, he made an exact copy of the *Elements*. Word for word, and sketch by sketch, he copied the book, stopping up till the small hours of the morning and sacrificing more than half the hours usually allotted to sleep.

The effect of this, he said in after years, was that his handwriting was greatly improved and it became easy for him to give sentences in English a proper formation; incidentally it was never necessary for him to refer to his copy of the *Elements*, since, in transcribing, he had also memorized the volume.

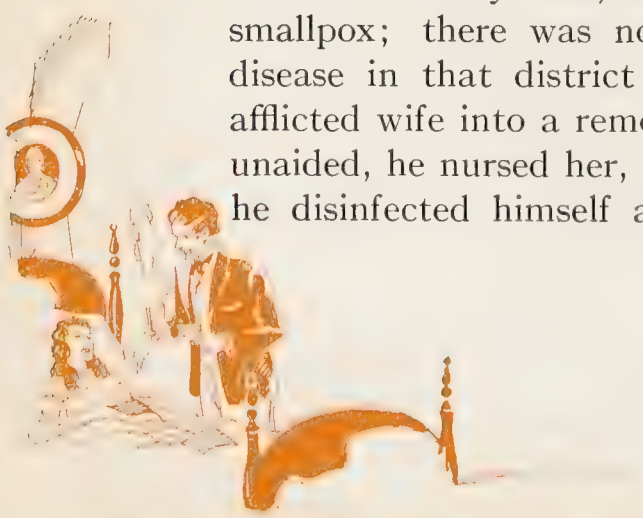
To a boy of this capacity, the mysteries of telegraphy were simple of solution. At the age of fifteen he could already receive and transmit messages and was employed as a regular operator. At sixteen he had become inspired with ambition; he had determined to become the superintendent of a railway. For several



Word for word, sketch by sketch, he copied the book

years he worked as hard as a man can work. He studied every department of the railway business. He took no holidays, and worked sixteen hours every one of the seven days of every week. He studied the clerical work, the draughtsmen's work, the train-schedule work—every kind of work including that of the repair shops and the line maintenance. He learned something of engine construction and bridge building; he contrived to gain some practical experience as a driver and as a train conductor. He studied the catering, and, mixing with the men as a fellow workman, he became familiar with the point of view of the personnel.

Naturally to a man of this calibre promotion came rapidly. At twenty-six he had attained his ambition and was already the superintendent of an important railway. In spite of the prodigious amount of railway work he had crowded in those arduous years of preparation, this amazing man had found time to pursue the other elements which made up his life. As a geologist he was in constant correspondence with several universities, museums and learned professors. His own collection, formed entirely of his own discoveries, was already important; his art work was so improved that he had been able to sell several sketches to various magazines; also he was married to a charming lady and the happy father of a promising daughter. He was an extraordinary man, as witness: his wife contracted smallpox; there was no proper hospital for such a disease in that district in those days; he took his afflicted wife into a remote attic and there, alone and unaided, he nursed her, throughout the day; at night he disinfected himself and proceeded to his office—



Unaided, Jan Horne nursed his wife through smallpox

after his staff had left for the day—and attended to his correspondence and business. His wife recovered, and he suffered no ill effects, neither did he convey the infection to any of his staff.

He became famous throughout the continent as a railway man. Position after position he was offered; these he accepted, until in the end no man could say he was Van Horne's superior in the management of a railway.

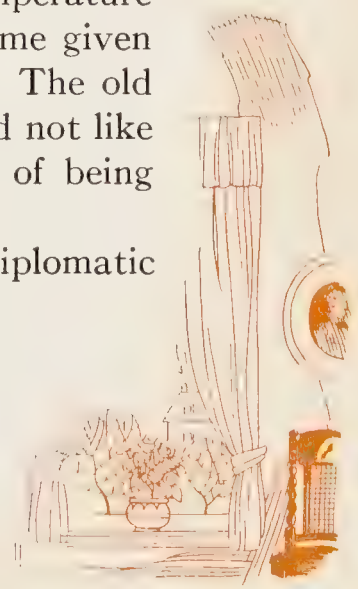
Thus it was that, when the C.P.R. was inaugurated and the construction of the line begun, J. J. Hill said to the directors of the company: "You need a man of great driving power; a man of great mental and physical power, to carry this thing through. Van Horne can do it."

So the company offered Van Horne the greatest salary that had ever been paid a railway man, and asked him to undertake the work.

Stipulating that he should have absolute power and control, that no one should interfere with his work of management and construction, Van Horne accepted. He came to Canada and started work; at that time he was thirty-eight years of age.

When Van Horne arrived in Winnipeg in December, 1881, to take over the work of building the new trans-continental, the thermometer showed the temperature to be forty below zero. It is said the welcome given the new chief of the line was just as chilly. The old employees did not like the new chief, they did not like his methods and they did not like the idea of being bossed by a foreigner.

On his part Van Horne was probably as diplomatic



as a wolfhound, and as gentle as a lynx. He went about his work blind to everything save efficiency and progress. He cared nothing for conventionality or kid-gloved politeness; his invective was that of the men of machine shops or the spike drivers on the track. An engineer, whether he was a college-bred man of blue prints and theories, or a hard boiled tobacco-chewing crane man living with a grease rag, was simply a man to Van Horne; he was just a workman to be driven and squeezed dry of all his strength and intelligence and industry—for the sake of the line.

He examined the staff, and those men he did not like he dismissed; he examined the various yards, and if he did not like any particular yard he sacked its entire personnel. He examined the accounts and the books, and if he thought he detected evidence of graft, he discharged everyone connected, however remotely, of participation or knowledge of that graft. This is not the method a newly appointed "boss" adopts if his first desire happens to be that of gaining popularity. Van Horne cared nothing for popularity; indeed he cared for nothing but efficiency. He exasperated the "old gang" to an even greater degree by importing from his old lines various workers who had served him faithfully during his previous activities.

During this cleansing process the virile new chief was spying out the land; he explored the plains west of Winnipeg, and he spent a week or two in the Rockies. He learned something of the stupendous nature of his task, and then appointed various surveying parties to explore the great mountains to find places where tracks could be laid with the least difficulty.

Afterwards he gave out various contracts to constructional companies for the laying of rails on different stretches on the plains, and then went to Montreal to confer with his directors.

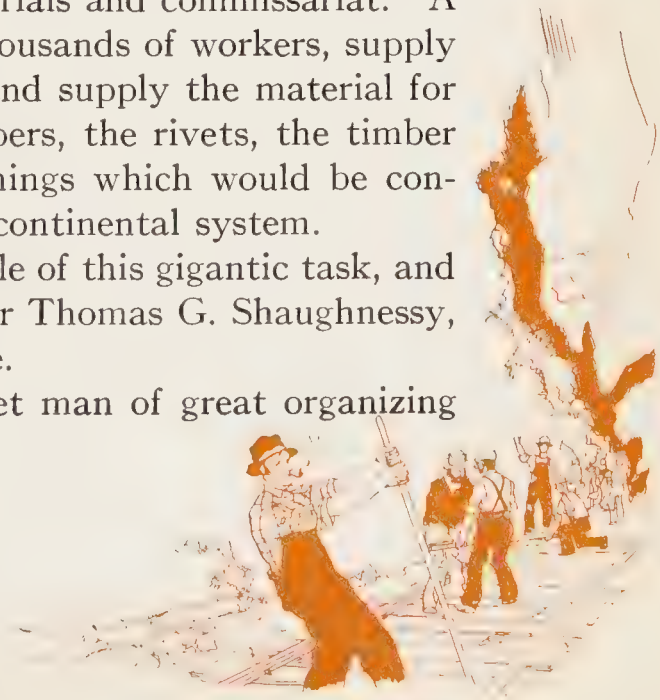
Time was the essence of the contract in the building of the road; promises had been made to British Columbia—the Government's word was pledged. Various officials had tinkered about with the road, and years had been wasted in futile talk. The pressing need of the new company was speed; ten years was the time allowed for the new group to complete the system from sea to sea. Of that ten years, some time had already elapsed and progress had been unsatisfactory. The more difficult districts had not been touched; the Rockies had not been properly surveyed.

Van Horne went to Montreal and told the directors many things. He rode rough shod over all their systems and their objections to his system. "Five hundred miles of rails I will lay during the next twelve months," he said. And then he made his plans.

His first need was a quartermaster-general, a purchasing agent; a man who would relieve his mind of everything to do with materials and commissariat. A man who would feed his thousands of workers, supply the tools for the building and supply the material for the line, the rails, the sleepers, the rivets, the timber —the thousand and one things which would be converted into the great transcontinental system.

He knew the man capable of this gigantic task, and he sent for him; he sent for Thomas G. Shaughnessy, an old Milwaukee associate.

Shaughnessy was a quiet man of great organizing



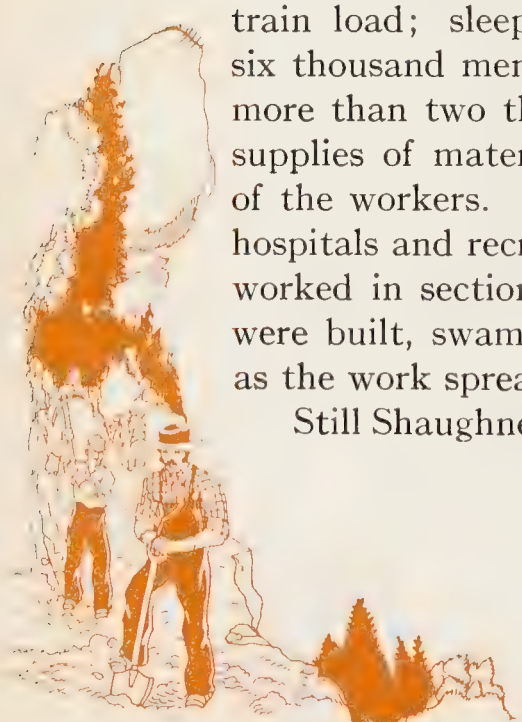
A multitude of gangs worked in sections

power and experience. Van Horne was the out-of-doors fighting man, the leader and the driver of men, the man of vision capable of overcoming, of conquering difficulty. Shaughnessy was the quiet man, the desk man, the man who could think in millions or in hundreds; the man who led men—but did not drive them. Van Horne was the visionary, the dreamer—a sort of herculean fighting poet if you will; Shaughnessy was the exactitudinarian, the man of figures and facts, the man who never made a mistake.

So Van Horne went West to build his five hundred miles of line within twelve months, knowing that his base was under the command of a strong man who was an organizer of genius. When the new "boss" had arrived at Winnipeg in December, 1881, the company had constructed one hundred miles of railway in twelve months. They had exhausted all their material; the base was destitute of supplies.

Now material began to arrive in vast quantities. Steel rails came from every rail producing country in the world; they came in thousands of ton lots, hundreds of thousands of rails accumulated; rivets came by the train load; sleepers in uncountable numbers. Over six thousand men were employed on the prairies, and more than two thousand teams were at work hauling supplies of material and food and all the necessaries of the workers. There were doctors and nurses, field hospitals and recreation rooms. A multitude of gangs worked in sections, leap-frogging each other; bridges were built, swamps abolished and little hills levelled as the work spread on, mile after mile.

Still Shaughnessy fed the insatiable army with food;



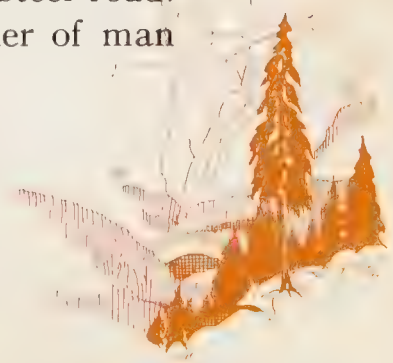
Navvies worked on narrow ledges

still he sent the steel and the wood for the line, and still Van Horne and his army consumed and used all that was sent.

Van Horne was everywhere—at his base in Winnipeg or at the railhead as it crept onward and westward. His engine could soon travel two, three, four hundreds of miles along the newly laid track of steel; and backwards and forwards he went, building stations, constructing culverts, erecting bridges, but always driving, restlessly driving.

In the end Van Horne missed his five hundred objective by a score or two of miles. But he had proved himself a matchless driver of men, and the king of railway constructors. Afterwards, in like manner, he relentlessly pursued his way. He pierced the Rockies and he surmounted them; by way of agony and bitterness he planted this iron road of progress. Men died, but he found others to take their places; men were shattered by dynamite and smashed by rocks, but others came forward. Navvies worked on narrow ledges in the mountains where a single mis-step meant a terrible death on the rocks thousands of feet below, and many men made those fatal mis-steps; but others took their places and put the rails along the ledges, or the dynamite cartridges in the drilled holes, trusting in God and Van Horne. For they knew that their boss would ask no man to go where he would not go himself, or to venture on any undertaking he would not willingly undertake himself.

This is not a history of the building of the great railway, of the construction of the mighty steel road. It is merely an attempt to show the manner of man



Van Horne was, and the manner of man Shaughnessy was.

They worked together, those two, until the end—the glorious completion of the road. They shared with their directors and Macdonald and Tupper in the financial vicissitudes of the company; they did their part in overcoming those financial shortages.

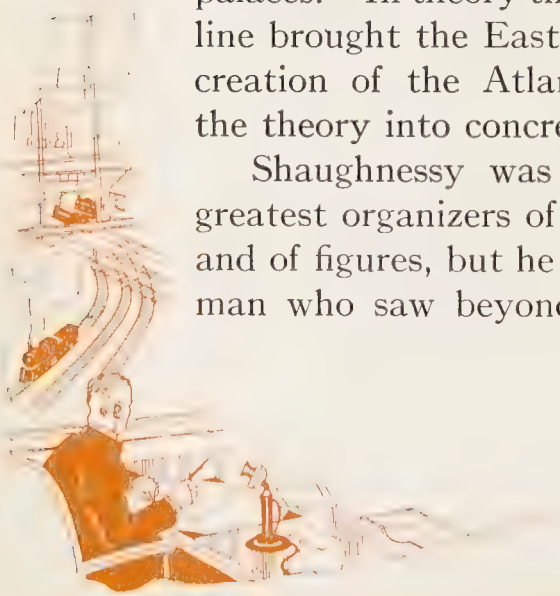
And when it was all over, Van Horne was appointed the first President of the Company, with Shaughnessy as the Vice-President.

With the same energy that they had displayed in the construction of the line, these two men set about creating for it a commercial success—with what result the world knows.

The old directors disappeared—Strathcona and Mountstephen, both made peers for their share in the creation of the line, and finally Van Horne himself—now Sir William Van Horne, K.C.M.G.—retired, leaving Shaughnessy, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, in supreme control.

It fell to Sir Thomas Shaughnessy to create the foundations of that vast structure the system has now become. It was he who launched the first fleet of steamers which has grown into many fleets of ocean palaces. In theory the building of the transcontinental line brought the East many miles nearer Europe; the creation of the Atlantic and Pacific fleets brought the theory into concrete fact.

Shaughnessy was a quiet man, but one of the greatest organizers of all time; he was a man of facts and of figures, but he was also a man of vast vision: a man who saw beyond the horizon and measured his



Shaughnessy was one of the greatest organizers of all time

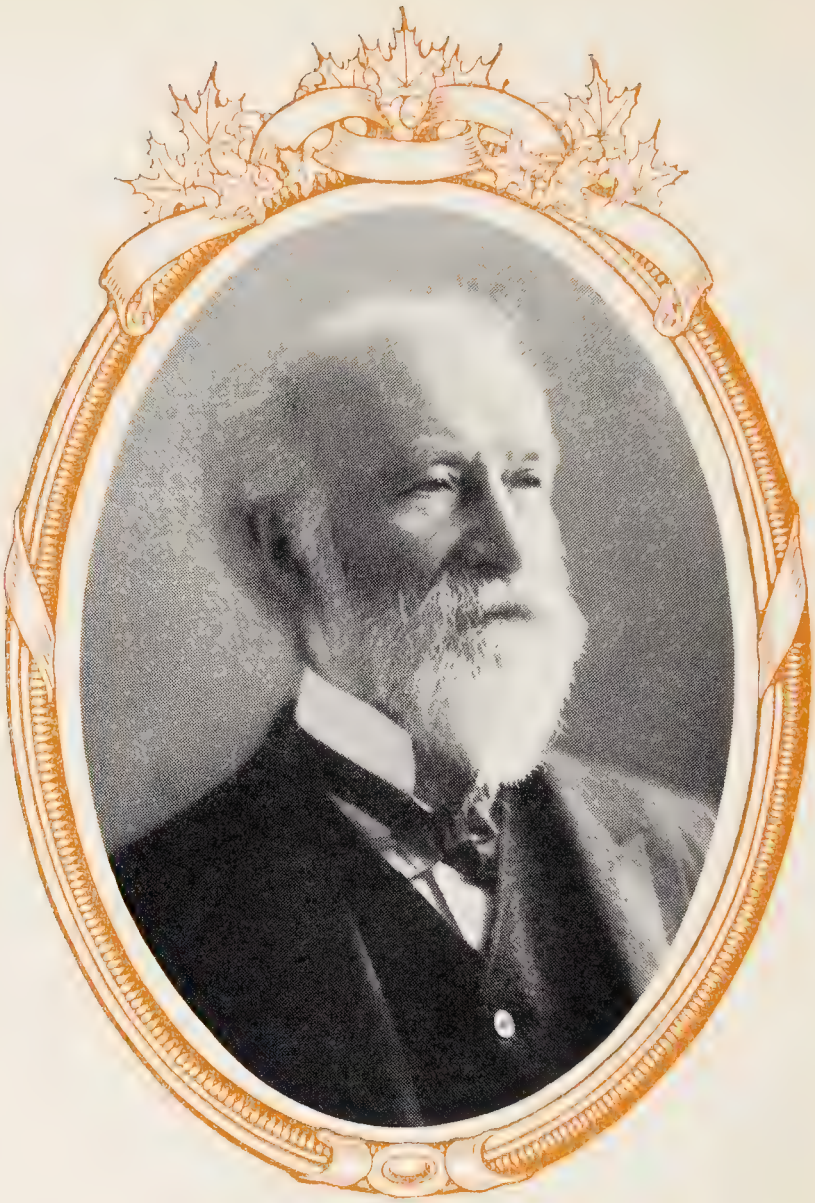
affairs by the measurements of oceans and the measurements of continents.

Van Horne lived out his life in travelling the world, collecting china and pictures, pretty stones and fossils and bric-a-brac; in painting in oil and water colour and filling sketch books, and now and again dabbling in commercial affairs. He died in Montreal in the year 1915, having lived beyond the allotted span of three score years and ten.

Shaughnessy, created by the King a peer, did magnificent work for the Dominion and for the Empire during the Great War, and died at the age of seventy. The colossal responsibility of the conduct of his vast transportation system during those awful years of conflict might have killed younger men than Shaughnessy. But he never swerved from perfection in the conduct of his administration, or in the genius of the management of his world-wide affairs.

Whatever the country of their birth, these two men, Sir William Van Horne, K.C.M.G., and Baron Shaughnessy, K.C.V.O., were outstanding men of the world, and Great Men of Canada.

Sir Sandford Fleming



Sir Sandford Fleming

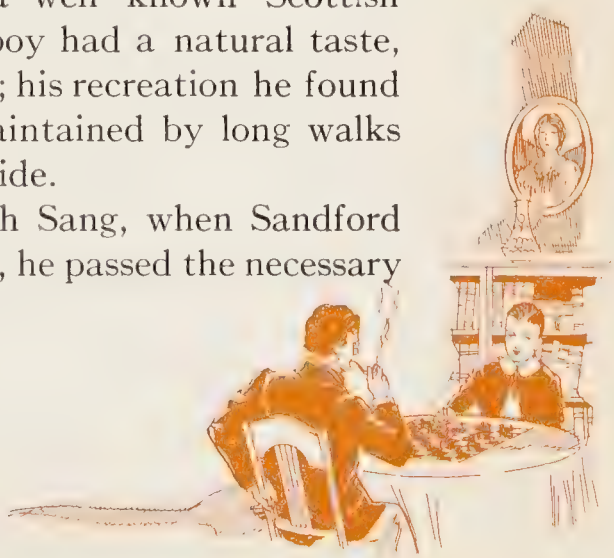
1827-1915

Sir Sandford Fleming

Sandford Fleming, one of Canada's greatest engineers, was born a century ago, in the year 1827, in the town of Kirkcaldy, County of Fife, Scotland. His parents were typical of that multitude of the fine middle class Scottish families who have sent so many of their sons to gain fame in the Dominions. From the districts north of the Tweed we have drawn John A. Macdonald, George Brown, Oliver Mowat, Mackenzie, Strathcona—scores of Great Men—and not the least of them was Sandford Fleming. Physically he was probably the greatest, for he was a giant of a man whose inches were nearer eighty than seventy. He was a great, genial man, who boasted an ancestor who fought by Prince Charlie's side at Culloden, and then became one of the boat's crew who rowed the unfortunate Stuart to France. Another ancestor fought under Wolfe at Quebec, and several had been distinguished in one or other of the learned professions.

Young Sandford attended the ordinary schools in the Kirkcaldy district, and at the age of fourteen he was articled to John Sang, a well known Scottish engineer and surveyor. The boy had a natural taste, even a genius for mathematics; his recreation he found in chess, and his health he maintained by long walks in and about his own countryside.

After about four years with Sang, when Sandford was about eighteen years of age, he passed the necessary

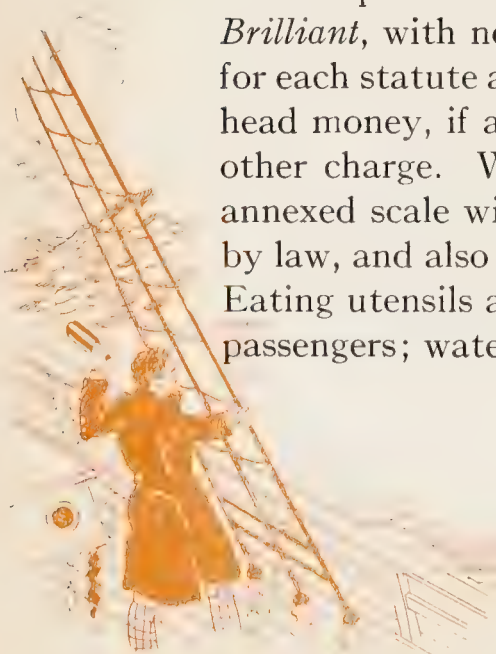


He found recreation in chess

examinations and became a qualified civil engineer and surveyor. Immediately he sought a field worthy of his youthful ambition, and wisely he decided that the openings for an eighteen-year old engineer were not outstanding in an old community like Kirkcaldy, or indeed in any part of Scotland. Canada was then a very young country with obvious openings for a young and vigorous professional man. David, Sandford's elder brother, had long contemplated emigration, and probably it was when the older boy ultimately decided to make the plunge and take ship for the West that Sandford determined to go with him.

It was in the year 1845 that the two brothers boarded a sailing ship in Glasgow en route for Quebec.

In his interesting volume, *Sandford Fleming, Empire Builder*, Lawrence J. Burpee is able to publish some very interesting extracts from Sandford's diary which he kept throughout the voyage. Especially interesting is a fac-simile of the original passenger ticket used on this occasion. The two boys were joined by a cousin, Henry Fleming, who also made the long journey. One ticket served the three passengers, and by it we read that, "I engage that the parties herein named shall be provided with a passage to Quebec, in the ship *Brilliant*, with not less than ten cubic feet for luggage for each statute adult, for the sum of £13. 10s. including head money, if any, at the place of landing, and every other charge. Water and provisions according to the annexed scale will be supplied by the ship, as required by law, and also fires and suitable hearths for cooking." Eating utensils and bedding had to be provided by the passengers; water and food were supplied by the ship.



threw the bottle into the sea"

Take it all in all it seems the £13.10s. paid by the three men represented a fairly low cost for a voyage which lasted six weeks.

We find that the *Brilliant* encountered bad weather and made a heavy passage; she was loaded with iron bars and some of this cargo shifted and threatened to bring the boat to disaster. Young Sandford became so concerned that he declared, "It did not seem possible that the ship could withstand the pounding much longer, and not knowing what might happen to us, I felt that I would like to send some word to my father . . . so I wrote a letter explaining our situation and what seemed our prospects. I sealed the letter in a bottle and threw it into the sea, thinking it might be the last letter I should ever write and that perhaps it might reach my father."

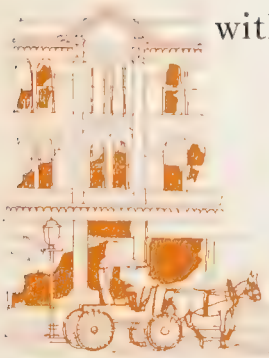
This bottle reached England safely and was picked up from the sea by a fisherman of Appledore, near Bideford, in the County of Devon.

Contrary to Sandford's expectation the ship *Brilliant* ran into finer weather at long last, and eventually sailed up the St. Lawrence to Quebec. From here the two brothers journeyed to Montreal and then on to Peterborough. It is interesting to know that the journey from Quebec to Peterborough, which can now be accomplished in ten hours, in the year 1845 occupied rather more than eleven days. After spending a month or two with a kinsman, Doctor Hutcheson, in Peterborough, the two youngsters left for Toronto, in which city they naturally expected to experience much good luck and to find a quick and ample fortune.

In those pioneer days of eighty years ago, Toronto

had not become a great city. Her population amounted to a scant twenty thousand, and her fame rested to a large extent upon the muddiness of her streets. Certain buildings were in course of erection when Sandford arrived, but luck did not come his way; though David speedily found suitable employment, Sandford could find no opening. Everywhere he was told that contractors were dismissing surveyors and engineers, and the wisest thing he could do was to return to Scotland. Instead, he proceeded to Hamilton, where again he failed to obtain employment in his own profession, but he met an old acquaintance named Bethune with whom he had travelled on the *Brilliant*. Bethune was on the eve of proceeding to his clearing, some thirty or forty miles distant, to put up his buildings and start on his farming activities. Sandford determined to accompany him and thus gain some practical experience of Ontario pioneer life. So pleasant did he find life in the bush that he almost decided to purchase a farm lot himself, and abandon the prospect of making a career as an engineer. He turned from this project by learning that his friend Dr. Hutcheson was critically ill in Hamilton and had expressed a keen desire to see his young kinsman. Sandford hurried to Hamilton to discover that Hutcheson's illness was not so serious as had been imagined; indeed, that the Doctor would be able to proceed to his own home in Peterborough within a few days. Fleming accompanied the Doctor, and by good fortune was able to secure a situation as draughtsman with Richard Birdsale of that city.

Here for a year or two Fleming occupied himself with Birdsale, in making surveys and plans of the

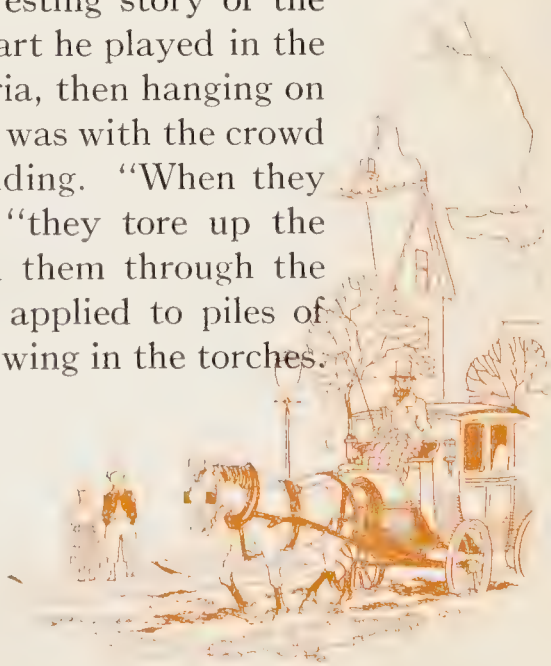


Peterborough, Newcastle and Cobourg districts. These plans had to be lithographed in order that they might be published, and in those days lithographers were scarce in Canada. Nothing daunted, Fleming bought suitable stones in Toronto and completed the work himself; fortunately it was an art he had studied as a youth in Scotland.

At this period he realized that it was necessary for him to obtain a Canadian certificate to qualify himself as a provincial land surveyor; this he obtained after serving a short space of time articled to a local man, Stoughton Dennis of Weston. Thus after four years of rather strenuous work and preparation, he journeyed to Montreal, then the seat of Government, to procure employment. In the capital city he passed another examination and in due time received his commission from the Governor-General, Lord Elgin.

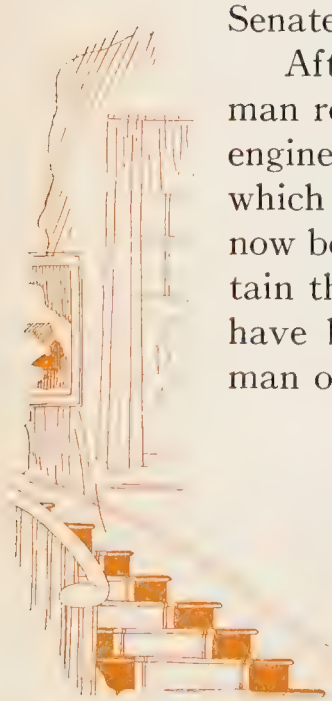
It is interesting to note that Lord Elgin handed the young Scotsman his commission on the day of the rioting over the Rebellion Losses Bill. It will be remembered that during the short period of rioting on that day, Elgin was pelted with eggs and stones, and the House of Parliament was burned to the ground.

Sandford Fleming tells an interesting story of the outrage on the House, and of the part he played in the saving of a portrait of Queen Victoria, then hanging on the wall above the throne. Fleming was with the crowd that rushed to the Parliament Building. "When they reached the building," he writes, "they tore up the planks of the sidewalk and dashed them through the lower windows. Lights were then applied to piles of parliamentary papers inside by throwing in the torches.



Toronto's muddy streets

The fire spread rapidly, and I could see that before long it would reach the library. Having spent many delightful days there examining old and rare books, I felt that the least I could do would be to try to save some of them. I gained entry but found the flames had already taken possession of the library and it was impossible to do anything there. Turning to the Legislative Hall, I saw the Queen's picture and determined to make an effort to save it. Three other men joined me, but we found it no easy task. The portrait was in a massive gilt frame firmly bolted to the wall. At last by putting our shoulders underneath and exerting our united strength we managed to loose the fastenings, and finally the frame came down with a crash. Finding the frame too heavy to handle, we removed the canvas on its stretching frame, and the four of us carried it out of the building, a shoulder under each corner. We were only just in time, for as we climbed slowly down the stairs the flames were roaring overhead and we had to stoop to prevent the picture being scorched." A few days after this a Montreal paper describing the fire remarked that "the Queen's picture was carried off by four scoundrels." The picture hangs today in the Senate.

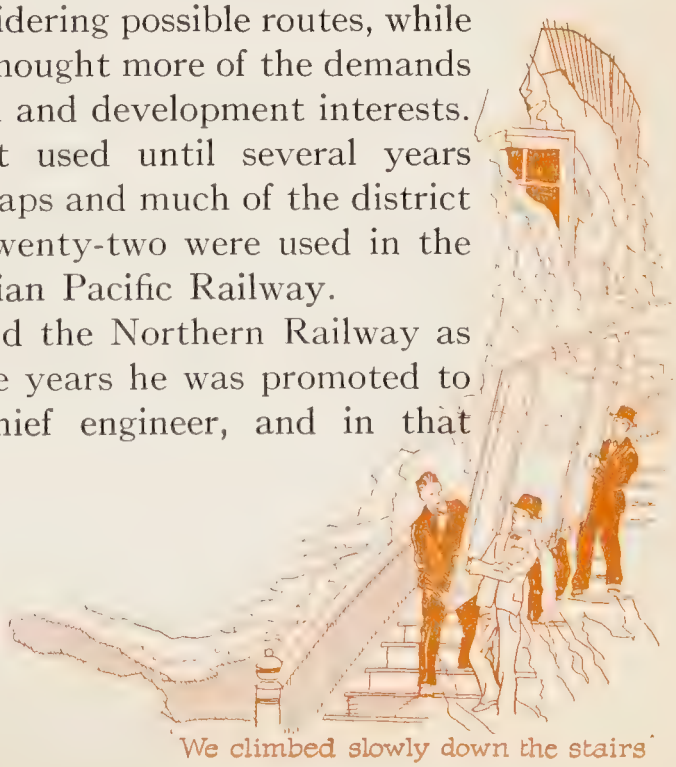


After these excitements this amazingly active young man returned to Toronto to pursue his practice as civil engineer. The same year he founded that institution which he christened the Canadian Institute and has now become the Royal Canadian Institute. It is certain that the progress of this great society would not have been accomplished if it had been launched by a man of less vigorous determination and activity. At

an early meeting of the Institute only two members attended—Fleming and one other. Fleming immediately seized the occasion to pass numerous clauses and rules and regulations without any opposition; he proposed, the other lonely member seconded, and thus the items were passed. Fleming embodied all these new rules and laws in printed form and sent them to many men who could be interested in the projects of the Institute; after that the Society went ahead with great rapidity and speedily became a strong factor in the life of Toronto, and later of Canada.

During his first years in Toronto, Fleming was a busy man. He planned and published charts of Toronto, Toronto Harbour and the adjacent shores of Lake Ontario. He was also employed by the Imperial Government in nautical surveys of Lake Huron from the Christian Islands to Penetanguishene. Much, if not all this work, was undertaken with a view to railway construction. The era of the railway had arrived in Canada, and many different districts were surveyed by several parties of differing interests. The Imperial Government naturally gave some attention to strategical value in considering possible routes, while the Canadian authorities thought more of the demands of agricultural, commercial and development interests. Fleming's plans were not used until several years afterwards; many of the maps and much of the district he surveyed as a lad of twenty-two were used in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In 1852 Sandford joined the Northern Railway as assistant engineer; in three years he was promoted to the important post of chief engineer, and in that

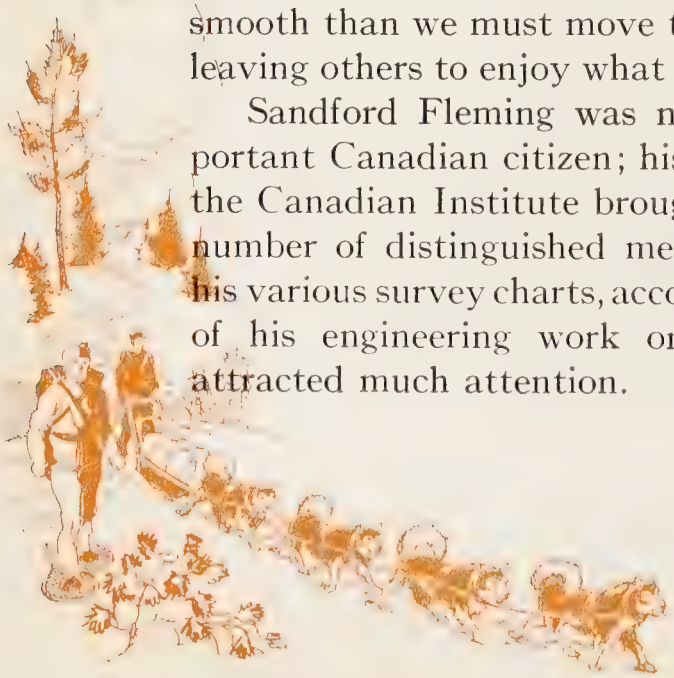


We climbed slowly down the stairs

position he remained eight years. This railway, which was first known as the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway, was completed as far as Collingwood on its run through Barrie from Toronto. Sandford Fleming's work on it was for the most part concerned with the run from Barrie to Collingwood. That he was a competent engineer and an employer popular with his men is shown by an address presented to him on his retirement by all the workmen: "Presented to Sandford Fleming, Esq., C.E. by the officers, employees and contractors engaged in the construction and late restoration of the Northern Railway of Canada as a token of their respect and admiration for his public character as an engineer, and for their highest esteem and regard for his private worth as a friend."

In his reply to this Fleming remarked, "I need scarcely allude to the cause of my retirement from the position of chief engineer of the company. You all know that I have finished my work, and such an office as it was my privilege to fill is now no longer required. It is one of the misfortunes of the professions to which I am proud to belong that our business is to make and not to enjoy; we no sooner make a rough place smooth than we must move to another and fresh field, leaving others to enjoy what we have accomplished."

Sandford Fleming was now becoming a very important Canadian citizen; his work as the organizer of the Canadian Institute brought him to the notice of a number of distinguished men, and the publication of his various survey charts, accompanied by the soundness of his engineering work on the Northern Railway, attracted much attention.



He started in winter with a little party on snowshoes

Among many other side issues with which he employed his time, Fleming had taken a large interest in the young western colony on the Red River. He had lectured and published lectures in sympathy with the little colony so precariously far from civilized Canada, and apparently so neglected an outpost of the Empire. It was probably due to this interest he displayed, coupled with his fame as a railway engineer, that caused the people of Red River to ask him to plead their cause for the establishment of means of communication between the eastern provinces and British Columbia by way of Lake Superior and Red River Colony.

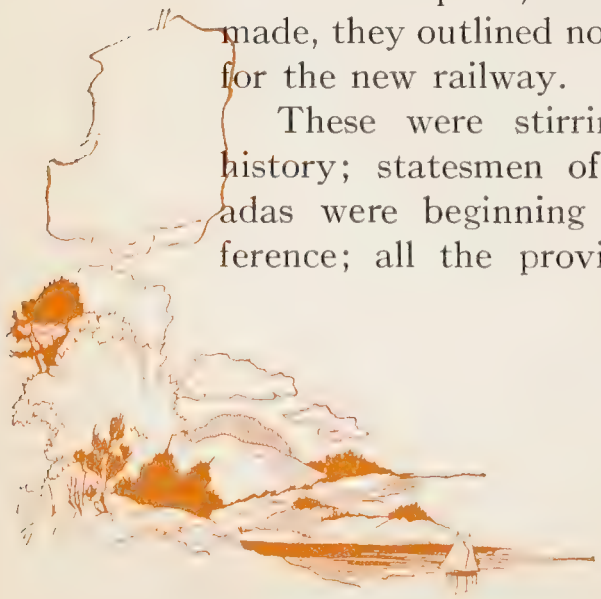
This was work of the kind that Sandford Fleming really enjoyed attempting. He was an enthusiastic pamphleteer, and readily prepared a strong and brilliant memorial of which he sent copies to John Sandfield Macdonald, the Prime Minister, and to Lord Monck, Governor-General. He then proceeded to England to interview the Colonial Secretary on behalf of the people of Red River. It was too much to expect that a project so immense and so important as the building of a transcontinental railway should be immediately accepted, but Fleming had ample reason to believe that his memorial had not been ignored either in Ottawa or Westminster. On his return to Canada John Sandfield Macdonald sent for him and asked him to undertake some important survey work for the Government. The two Canadas in conjunction with the Maritime provinces, aided by England, proposed to build a line from Quebec to the Maritime ports. This work was to be entrusted to three engineers, one representing the Canadas, a second the Maritimes and a third, the Duke

of Newcastle, the English Colonial Secretary. Fleming accepted the work from the Canadian Government, and was astonished to learn that the Duke of Newcastle had intimated his desire that Sandford Fleming should represent the Home authorities, and that his services were also desired by the two Maritime provinces.

In 1864 he commenced the great survey for the Intercolonial Railway. He started in the depth of winter with a little party on snowshoes, through very broken country richly furnished with awkward forests. Such instruments and provisions as could not be carried on dog-sleds had to be carried on men's backs—and in a large scientific equipment there was much delicate paraphernalia unsuited to the rough going of the sleds. It was a jolly life for all concerned, this pioneer work in the romantic, frozen wilderness, and Sandford Fleming enjoyed it to the full—in spite of the fact that the commissariat officials at Ottawa had provisioned the party with dubious canned meat left over from the Crimea War and sold—by someone who would now be called a commercial genius—to the Canadian Government.

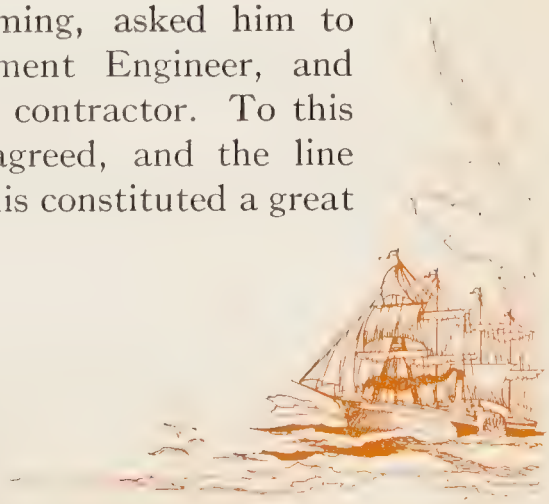
Naturally Fleming conducted his survey in a thoroughly extensive manner. By the middle of 1864 he had an army of assistants engaged throughout the district he had to explore, and in 1865, when his reports were made, they outlined no less than fifteen different routes for the new railway.

These were stirring months and years in our history; statesmen of the Maritimes and the Canadas were beginning to meet one another in conference; all the provinces were beginning to realize



that they were closely related to their neighbouring provinces—in fact to all the provinces of British North America. Confederation was being discussed; John A. Macdonald was beginning to feel the full power of his genius for leadership, and Tupper had begun to act and to arrange things for Macdonald and for Canada. D'Arcy McGee was going from province to province, city to city, town to town, preaching the doctrine of a great and united Dominion. Transportation enthusiasts were springing into being. The North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company had several years before sent the first steamship across the Atlantic—sometimes it is forgotten that this was the beginning of the great Cunard Line, and that Sir Samuel Cunard was a Canadian, and that his first steamer to cross the Atlantic was built in Canada, owned in Canada and manned by Canadians—and railway enthusiasts were becoming a power in the political world. John A. Macdonald, Joseph Howe, Tupper, Strathcona and Galt were beginning to talk from public platforms, while Sandford Fleming was making good in the wilderness.

In a very short time Fleming was appointed Chief Railway Engineer to the Government of Nova Scotia. This Government had attempted to construct a line of railway from Truro to Pictou by the system of a number of small contracts; this policy did not pay, and in the end they sent for Fleming, asked him to resign the position of Government Engineer, and construct the line as an ordinary contractor. To this Fleming with some reluctance agreed, and the line was completed in due course. This constituted a great



The first steamer to cross the Atlantic

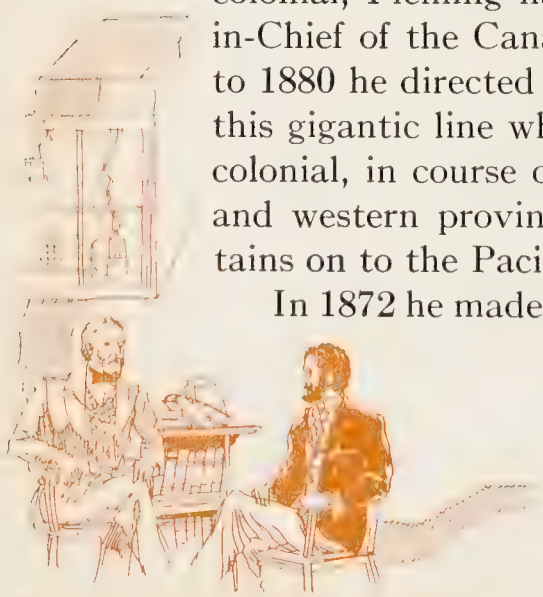
engineering feat for Fleming, since throughout the few short months he was allowed for the construction of this fifty miles of railway, he was obstructed by the wettest summer known in Canadian history.

Throughout all these years of his early activities Fleming had never relaxed his interest in the Intercolonial line. For some thirteen years he had been Chief Engineer of the line, and his duties had demanded not only stupendous effort but also infinite patience. However clever a government may appear to be it usually contains one or two individuals of peculiar ideas in regard to certain affairs. Or perhaps it is confronted by an opposition of such strength that it is goaded into acts of obvious foolishness. But the fact remains that important servants of governments are frequently hampered by the red tape of officialdom.

Thus Fleming had to fight Ottawa for a considerable time before he could persuade the Government to permit him to construct all the bridges of the Intercolonial of iron—they seemed to think wood strong enough, and for some time refused to recognize any danger of fire. But in the end the engineer gained his point, as throughout his career he gained many points.

During the last five years of his work on the Intercolonial, Fleming had also been engaged as Engineer-in-Chief of the Canadian Pacific Railway. From 1871 to 1880 he directed the surveys for the construction of this gigantic line which was to stretch from the Intercolonial, in course of preparation, through the eastern and western provinces, and across the Rocky Mountains on to the Pacific.

In 1872 he made his first survey journey right across



"Do you know, it took me eight years to write that little book"

the continent, and in the following years, until 1880, he periodically repeated these adventurous journeys along the trails of the wilderness. The romance and strength and terrific energy of this great man must appeal to everyone; he is a fitting subject for a book of adventure, a treatise on railway construction, or a sermon from any pulpit. We have no space for such a wealth of detail—splendid detail—as occurs in the record of his nine years' association with the Canadian Pacific. He severed his connection with this great enterprise when the Government passed the concern over to the ownership of a private company, headed by the great financiers of Montreal—Lord Mountstephen and his cousin, Strathcona. But Fleming was one of that little party who witnessed the driving of the last spike in the completed line in October, 1885.

Our engineer had made a short visit to England where the Sovereign created him a C.M.G.; during this visit Sandford had the honour of meeting Thomas Carlyle, who, we are told, held his visitor's hand for ten minutes, and "with brightening eyes he gave me an outline of the birth of the great classic, *Sartor Resartus*." "Do you know," Carlyle said finally, "it took me eight years to write that little book."

Sandford Fleming's connection with the laying of the Pacific Cable is not the least romantic chapter of his long romantic life. The details which include strenuous interviews at Downing Street and Westminster and Ottawa, have also a slight flavour of the sea; almost of filibustering on the high seas, since Fleming attempted to take possession of a Pacific Island for the purpose of his beloved cable. Unfortunately neither Britain nor the

apparent owners of the Isle—the Hawaiian Government—approved Sandford's buccaneering policy, and it died almost before it was born. But throughout his life the father of the Pacific Cable thought that bright little adventure ought to have proceeded and succeeded. There is no doubt that the Empire owes a tremendous debt to Sandford Fleming for the existence of the cable. He took no part in its construction, but he was responsible for its inception, and doubly responsible that the movement came to a successful climax.

From 1876 to 1896 Fleming laboured for the success of the movement for Standard Time. In the projection of this vastly important system he wrote scores—hundreds—of pamphlets and delivered innumerable lectures, and it was largely through his energy and influence that we have in existence today a system of universal or cosmic time.

So this great Canadian filled a glorious life with great achievements. He worked for Canada and for the Empire and for the world. He was a humanitarian with a scientific mind and a great gift of humour; and he lived for others rather than for himself. Thus he achieved greatness and success.

Among the scores of honours conferred upon him were the K.C.M.G. in 1897, and the degree of LL.D. by Queen's University in 1908. Two other universities, St. Andrew's and Columbia, had already conferred upon him this degree; and he was a Fellow of all the learned societies of the Dominion, and of many of those of other countries.

A Great Man and a splendid Canadian, Sir Sandford Fleming died peacefully at Halifax in June, 1915.

Sir Adam Beck

Sir Adam Beck

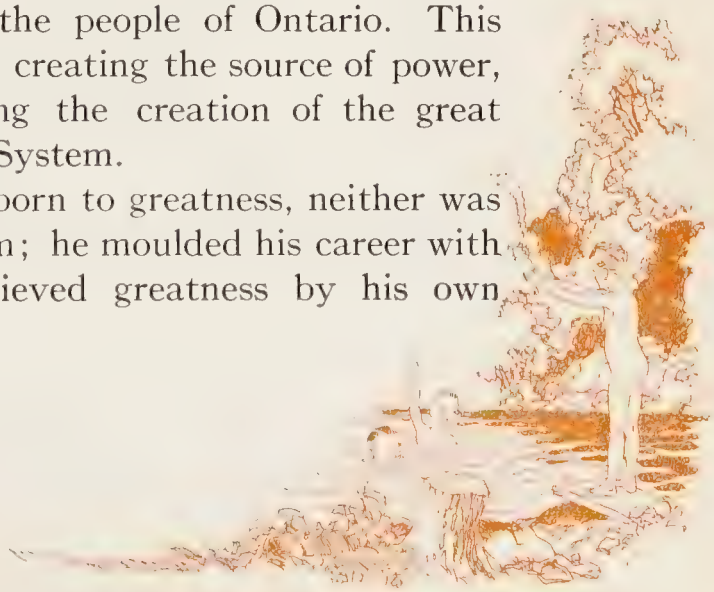
1858-1925

Sir Adam Beck

Adam Beck was a great man not merely because he brought into being the most gigantic hydro-electric power system in all the world, but by reason of the fact that he proved himself the strongest champion of public ownership this or any other continent has ever known. He was a fine fighting man, but his fighting qualities were taxed, not in combatting difficulties in the construction of the hydro system, but in his encounters with powerful interests which sought to transform the system into a private trust.

It is no exaggeration to assert that *power* is the essence of industrial existence; without it no machine will turn, no manufactured thing can be created; without it there can be little comfort in life, and no material profit. Obviously ownership of the source of its power gives a large control to the owner over any community or province. Capitalists—chiefly alien capitalists—sought to control the power essential to the well-being of Ontario. Beck prevented them. He fought them off and defeated them, and kept the control of Ontario power in the hands of the people of Ontario. This he did even while he was creating the source of power, while he was supervising the creation of the great Ontario Hydro-Electric System.

Adam Beck was not born to greatness, neither was greatness thrust upon him; he moulded his career with his own brain and achieved greatness by his own

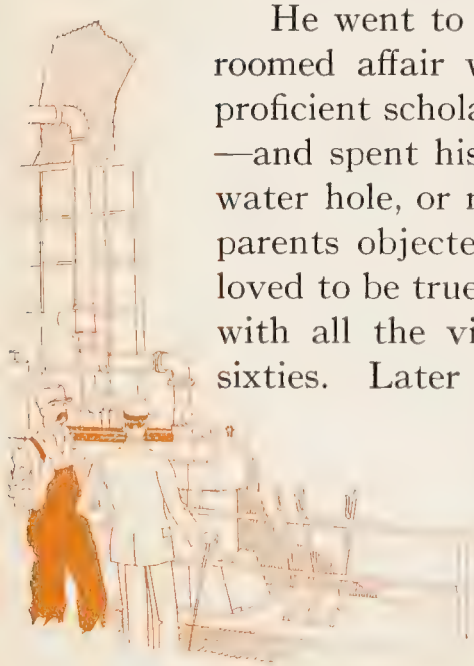


Splashing in the local water hole

unaided effort. Born in 1858 in Baden, then a small hamlet in the south-west of old Ontario, he came of respectable stock who were of German origin. His father was a farmer, a mill owner, and an iron founder; also he was a man of inventive and somewhat adventurous character, quick to experiment with new ideas. He founded the Town of Baden, in a period when the creation of new towns—on blueprints—was considered a certain path to prosperity, but succeeded in losing money in the process. He appears to have been temperamentally incapable of remaining in a groove, and in consequence the fortune of his family varied from time to time in accordance with the success or non-success of his latest enterprise.

Adam's childhood was spent in a fine, rambling old farmhouse which his parents made locally famous by reason of unstinted hospitality; hospitality of that old Germanic quality which included vast meals, and old songs sung by all present, unaccompanied by any instrument. Adam was no great songster, but he joined heartily in all the merriment, and in early youth mastered the cornet sufficiently well to enable him to join the local band.

He went to the local school—in those days a two-roomed affair with a master who may have been a proficient scholar, but was probably entirely untrained—and spent his leisure hours in splashing in the local water hole, or rushing barefoot about the fields. His parents objected to the barefoot business, but Adam loved to be true to the local fashion, and despised boots with all the vigour of a sturdy country boy of the sixties. Later young Beck went to Doctor Tassie's



Beck was always interested in engines

school in Galt, and afterwards to the Rockwood Academy and the Western University. The foundry owned by Beck Senior at Baden was at this time in a flourishing condition, and in 1876, at the age of eighteen, Adam joined his father in this business. Here he remained for three years, gaining a practical knowledge of foundry work and engineering practice which served him in good stead throughout his career. He had a natural capacity for work of any description that concerned engines; books he cared little about; his youth and early manhood were absorbed by work of a practical nature and sport. During this spell in his father's workshop his particular recreations were baseball and lacrosse.

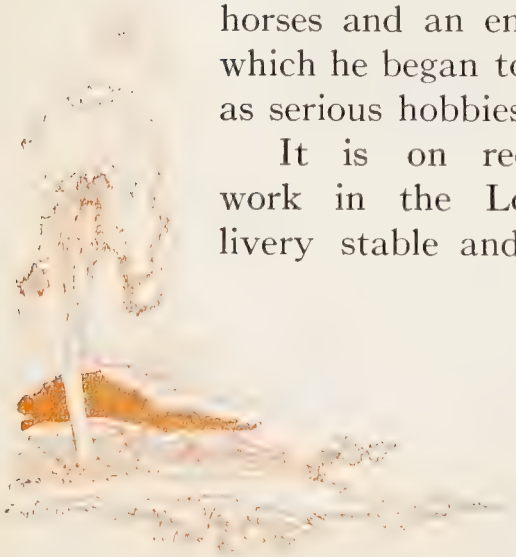
In 1879 the business of Beck Senior failed, and after a short visit to Detroit, Adam journeyed to Toronto, where he entered the service of the Morrison Brass works as a clerk. Office work soon palled on the energetic young man, and in consequence we find him, in 1880, starting a box factory with his brother William and his cousin Hespeler at Galt.

The Galt business prospered, but the partners felt that the proper location for their factory and business would be London. In 1884 London was a thriving and progressive centre, though it could boast a population of only thirty thousand; the city had already become an important railway centre. The council had instituted a system of exemption from taxation in order to induce certain desirable factories to remove to the city —a system maintained by some communities to this day. Realizing the value of this, the Becks approached the authorities with the suggestion that they would

remove to London, and employ at least twenty hands, in return for an exemption from taxation and a grant of free water for a period of five years. There was certain opposition to this proposition; free water was offered, but no exemption from taxation. Local box makers, not unnaturally perhaps, objected to newcomers being granted privileges denied to the old inhabitants. However, young Adam Beck journeyed to London and petitioned the council in person. He offered to guarantee the employment of at least twenty-five men, and to add the manufacture of veneering to their business —and he prevailed. The Beck factory was removed to Albert Street, London, where its business and its influence increased from year to year. Within a few months branches were established in Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton.

Adam Beck was now twenty-seven years old; he had already become a prosperous business man and an important employer of labour. Also he had achieved considerable local prominence in sporting circles. He had distinguished himself as a baseball and lacrosse player of more than usual ability, and, in 1883, he and a young banker had carried off the tennis doubles championship of Western Canada. In 1884 he began to take up horse riding in a thorough manner. Always, even as a boy on his father's farm, he had been fond of horses and an enthusiastic rider, but the manner in which he began to take up riding and horse breeding as serious hobbies is interesting—indeed romantic.

It is on record that, tired with the day's work in the London factory, he visited a local livery stable and hired a horse in order to enjoy



a little exercise. From the beginning this horse interested him, though he knew its chief employment was that of a hack horse driving people to the station, or less fortunate individuals to the cemetery. Adam tried the neglected horse at a fence or two, and was so impressed with his ability that he forthwith purchased the animal, and the station hacks knew him no more. With very little training this horse developed into a first class jumper, winning valuable prizes in England and the United States, as well as in his native Canada. This animal, newly christened Rosebery, represented the beginning of Beck's stables.

From this period, onward to 1898, Adam Beck lived the life of a business man of increasing prosperity. His chief recreation had become that of breeding horses and the improvement of his stable. This hobby had the happy result of bringing to him the greatest happiness of his life in that it brought him in contact with a distinguished horsewoman of Hamilton, Miss Lillian Ottaway, daughter of C. J. Ottaway of the Inner Temple. Beck married this accomplished lady in 1898, and forthwith plunged into public life. His first effort was an unsuccessful attempt to capture a seat in the Ontario Legislature; defeated in this he began to interest himself in local affairs. He formed rifle clubs and donated trophies for the encouragement of amateur sport; and in 1901 became a trustee on the hospital board. The following year he was elected Mayor of the city.

By this time, needless to say, he had become an exceedingly prosperous man; prosperous not only because of his own business with its various ramifications

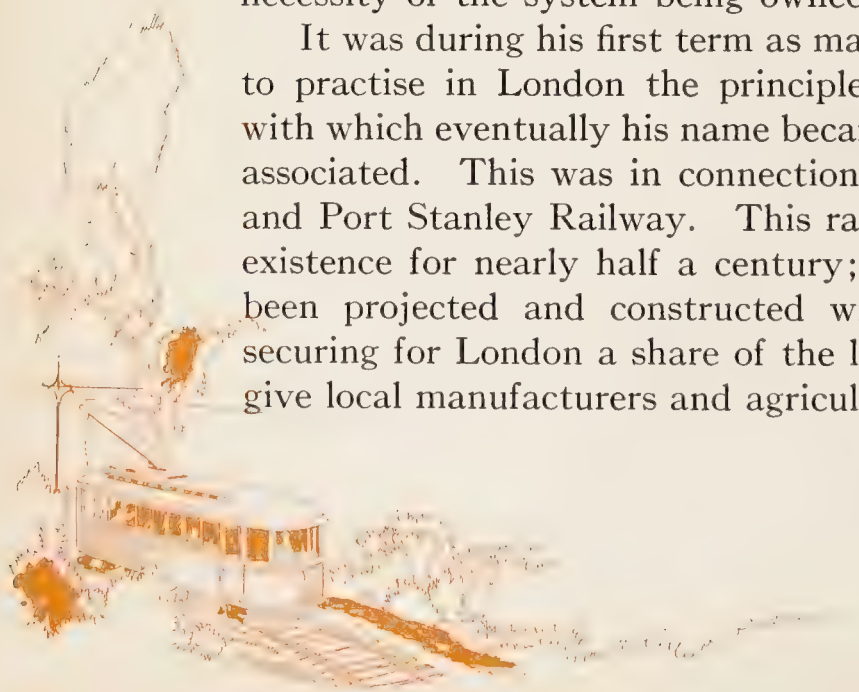
Adam Beck was an enthusiastic horseman

but by reason of his acceptance of directorships of various prosperous concerns in the province.

This year, 1902, proved to be the most momentous in the earlier period of Beck's career. In January he was, for the first time, elected Mayor of London; in May he was for the first time elected member of the Provincial Legislature; in June he was invited to join a conference of manufacturers held in Berlin (now the City of Kitchener) to discuss cheap electric power from Niagara, and in September he attended the first meeting of the newly organized Union of Canadian Municipalities held at Montreal.

The Berlin meeting marked the beginning of the great hydro movement; and after that meeting this subject absorbed more and more of Beck's intelligence and attention. He, in common with other large Ontario manufacturers, realized that their prosperity —their very existence—depended on their ability to acquire cheap and efficient power. From that meeting certain missionary work resulted, at first of a more or less desultory character. Beck immediately began throughout the country to hammer away at the necessity of the system being owned by the province.

It was during his first term as mayor that he began to practise in London the principle of electrification with which eventually his name became internationally associated. This was in connection with the London and Port Stanley Railway. This railway had been in existence for nearly half a century; originally it had been projected and constructed with the object of securing for London a share of the lake traffic, and to give local manufacturers and agriculturists easy access

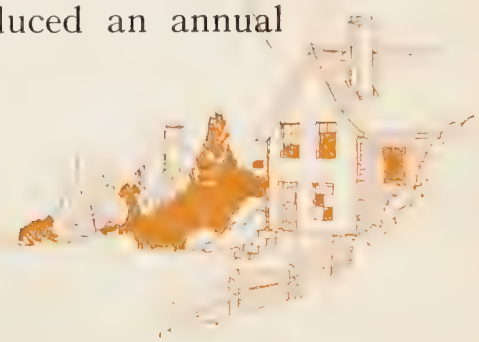


By 1915 the electrified line was in operation

to the shipping. The municipality virtually owned the concern, but it was leased out to various contractors. The line was not a success; the various contractors who had leased it and worked it, had made a failure of it. Its rolling stock was obsolete, decrepit and unsafe; the line was on the verge of bankruptcy.

When Beck became Mayor, the company operating the concern had a lease which had twelve years to run; in order that the line should continue to be used, it was determined by the operators that certain expense must be incurred in effecting repairs, and replacing in part the feeble rolling stock; to justify this expense they applied for a thirty years' extension of their lease. To the amazement of the district, Beck refused to sanction this extension. Even in those early days he believed in eventual electrification and municipal management. In 1912, two years before the expiry of the old lease, he was able to definitely suggest electrification; and in spite of tremendous opposition, by the municipal election of 1913 he gained his point—the electors supported him.

By 1915 a newly constructed, newly managed, electrified line was in operation, and had already proved itself a successful and paying proposition. In the last year of its existence as a steam-driven line the system had carried just over one hundred thousand passengers; four years after its electrification it carried just under a million people. The electrification had not cost the taxpayers of London a single dollar; instead, property values had been enhanced, and a concern which had yielded fifteen thousand a year had been converted into an efficient organization which produced an annual

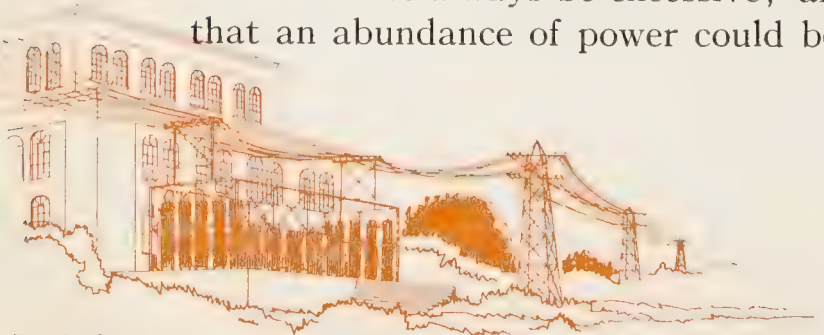


profit of seventy thousand. This was one of the local enterprises and successes which made Adam Beck a very popular Mayor of London. Another instance was that he procured for the city a pure water supply—a detail which sounds simple enough when one mentions it, but in the accomplishment of which Beck had to risk a considerable amount of his personal money.

One other point must be mentioned in regard to his municipal activities. In 1909 Beck was appointed President of the London Health Association. At that time there was no accommodation in Western Ontario for the treatment of tuberculosis, yet through the tremendous efforts of this dynamic man, a sanatorium was opened a few miles out of London within a year of his appointment. Afterwards he added a preventorium and a reception hospital. In later years a nurses' home was erected at the personal expense of Adam Beck and his wife—then Sir Adam and Lady Beck—"in gratitude to God for the complete restoration to health of our daughter."

Numerous other instances of Beck's municipal activities, of his sporting prowess, and of his encouragement of amateur sport, could be chronicled; but we must come to the story of his greater fight and his greatest achievement—the formation of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power System.

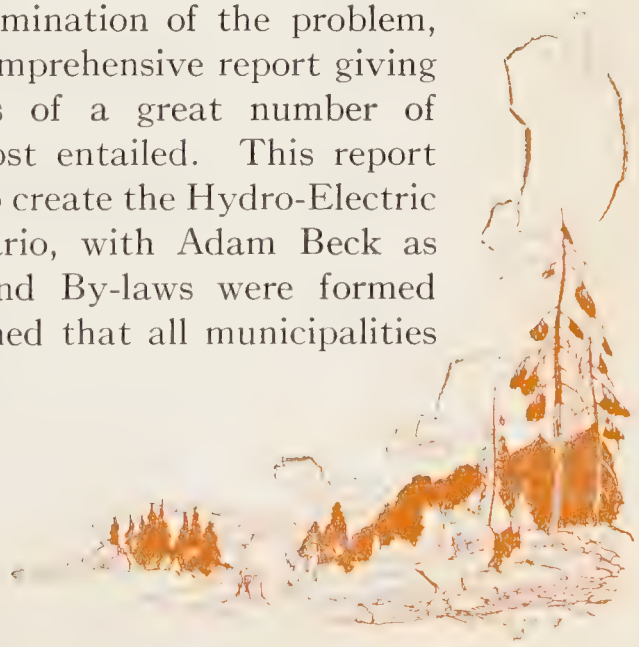
In bald outline, the history of the hydro system is comparatively commonplace. Manufacturers and public spirited citizens realizing the increasing need of power; knowing by experience that the cost of coal in Ontario must always be excessive; and understanding that an abundance of power could be made available



Beck built transformer stations and transmission lines

from the great waterways of the province; gathered together and determined to harness that power and divert it to their own uses. These people formed a committee, of which Beck was a member, and investigations disclosed that private corporations dealing with power of this description frequently charged their customers prices exorbitantly high in proportion to the expense and labour entailed for their services. Consequently many localities were canvassed, and a considerable number of important municipalities expressed their willingness to support a publicly owned system of power distribution. Meanwhile, in 1900, the Toronto Board of Trade made a report directing attention to the possibility of securing an abundant supply of power from the Niagara River.

Interest in the proposition increased, and many public meetings were held throughout the province. Subsequently the Government of the province, when Sir James Whitney was Premier, took notice of the matter. In 1903 legislation provided the means by which a commission could be appointed by interested municipalities to investigate and report upon the proposition. Thereupon a group of important municipalities appointed the Ontario Power Commission, which made a thorough examination of the problem, and, in 1906, published a comprehensive report giving the estimated requirements of a great number of districts and the probable cost entailed. This report prompted the Government to create the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, with Adam Beck as Chairman. Several Acts and By-laws were formed but eventually it was ordained that all municipalities



must appeal to the Ontario Commission for their supply of power. Thus the system became systematized and centralized.

In outline that is the story of the Hydro, but it is by no means the history of its formation. For the formation of the system did not occur without opposition—opposition of a purely political character, and opposition of a financial nature. There were honest politicians, and other public men, who saw in the establishment of the Hydro a hydra of expense, and considered the whole proposition a foolish pipe-dream of a group of simpletons. These opponents were honest and clean in their methods of criticism; but there were others. There were the representatives of those international financiers who saw in the formation of this power system a means of putting hundreds of millions in their own pockets; and by its ownership the certain prospect of securing other dollars by the hundreds of millions. For he who controls the power controls the machinery and the machinists, the manufactory and the manufacturer.

It was Adam Beck who faced all these opponents, clean and unclean alike, and fought them to a finish; finished them all off, knocked them out; and then, the conqueror, fell himself, exhausted and worn out.

Beck had been elected to the Ontario Parliament in 1902. In the 1905 election he was re-elected and joined the Whitney Cabinet as minister without portfolio. In that year he was appointed Chairman of the new commission created to control the rates to be charged for power, and to construct all necessary works and to take steps to place electrical energy for power and light

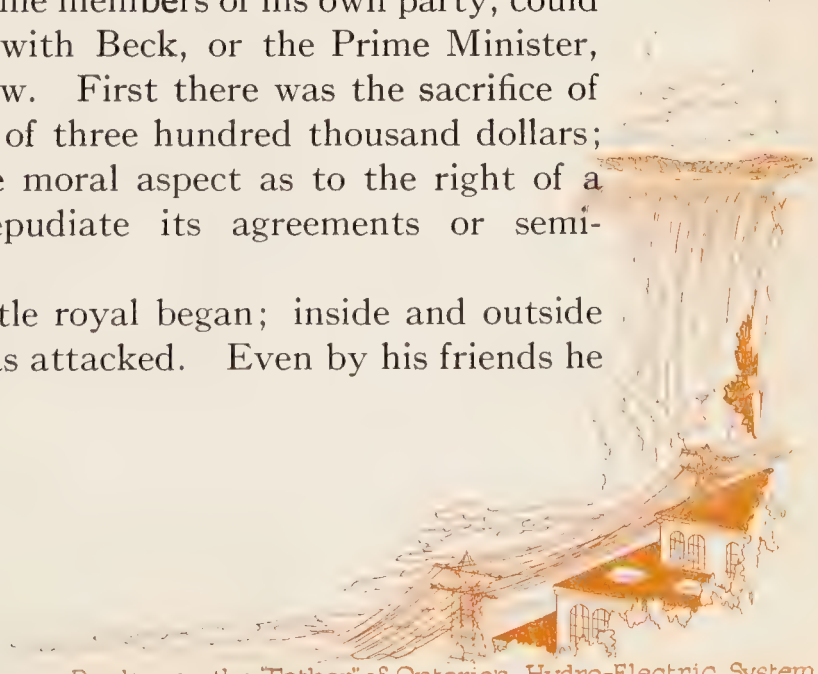
within the reach of the people. All this occurred during the regime of Sir James Whitney as Prime Minister.

The previous Government under Prime Minister Ross had made agreements through the commissioners of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park with certain private companies developing power at the Falls. In public speeches Ross had praised these agreements, and also one it was proposed should be made with the Electrical Development Company, by which some three hundred thousand dollars annual rental would accrue to the province. The Ross Government went out of power before this agreement was concluded.

Whitney came into power and forthwith made Beck minister without portfolio. He soon became known as Minister of Power. His first important speech was an attack on the proposed agreement of the late Government, declaring that the safeguards to protect the public were not worth the paper on which they were written. The new Government, he stated, would not ratify the agreement, or grant any additional agreements. Then the Commission was appointed.

It can be readily seen that many members of the House, including some members of his own party, could not see eye to eye with Beck, or the Prime Minister, in this point of view. First there was the sacrifice of an annual revenue of three hundred thousand dollars; then there was the moral aspect as to the right of a government to repudiate its agreements or semi-agreements.

And so the battle royal began; inside and outside the House Beck was attacked. Even by his friends he



Beck was the "Father" of Ontario's Hydro-Electric System

was criticised politically; by his enemies he was lampooned and ridiculed and attacked without mercy. But he remained steadfast in his championship of the municipalities and municipal ownership, and the municipalities remained steadfast in the support of their champion.

There is no doubt that if there had been no Adam Beck in existence at that period, there would never have been a publicly owned hydro system. The control would have passed to financiers of unknown character or nationality.

In the teeth of all this opposition, on the formation of the active Commission, Beck proceeded to build transformer stations and transmission lines for the distribution of power to contracting municipalities. At first it was deemed advisable to purchase power from existing companies who had extensive plants already erected at Niagara Falls. Consequently, in 1908, a commission contracted with the Ontario Power Company for the supply of 100,000 horse power of electrical energy to be supplied over a period of time at a decreasing cost. By 1910 the Commission was supplying ten municipalities, and in 1915 the Commission had reached the limit of its contract with the Ontario Company for 100,000 horse power. Other contracts were made, but subsequently the Commission purchased the Ontario Power Company and other existing companies, and later constructed new power plants for its service.

From its inception the Commission justified its existence by becoming an immediate, almost an astounding success. But the success brought no

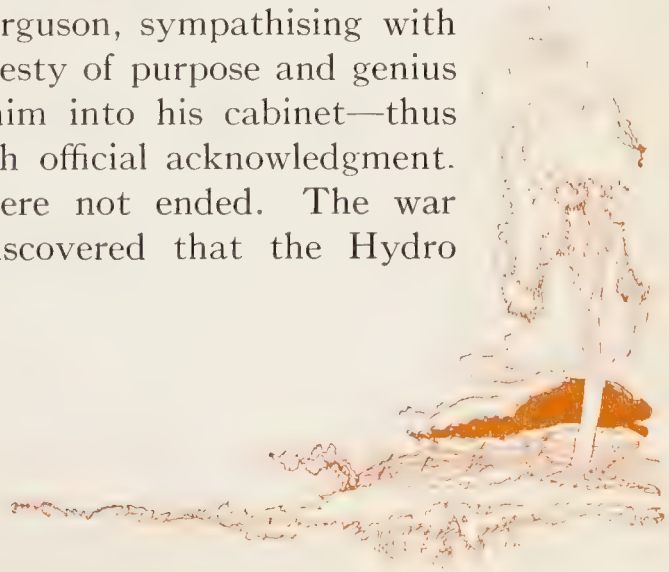
During the War Beck became Remount Commissioner

palliative to Beck; some of his enemies and detractors continued their merciless campaign of opposition. The more contemptible among them offered bribes; the less dishonest merely attempted to obstruct the larger development of the great organization.

The new Government proved antagonistic to Beck personally, although they could not attack the hydro system. They created a number of enquiries of a nature suggestive of their official suspicion of Beck's personal honour in financial matters. Pinpricks these, which, to a man of Beck's imaginative nature and impeccable honesty, were like double-edged sword thrusts. His enemies could find no fault to bring against him, but they succeeded in making him miserable and unhappy. They attacked his staff, they did everything thinkable and unthinkable to hound him out of his high office. They could not turn him out—the public of Ontario would not have allowed that; all their nastiness had to be of a secret nature. For the mass of the people saw in Beck a benefactor and a hero, a strong man and the greatest citizen.

Friends advised Beck to retire, to give up the fight. But he refused. "I am the servant of the people," he said. And finally the hostile government fell in its turn, and disappeared in a cloud of smoke. A new Government came into existence, and its Prime Minister, Honourable G. Howard Ferguson, sympathising with Beck, and knowing his honesty of purpose and genius of accomplishment, took him into his cabinet—thus giving the hydro chief, high official acknowledgment.

But Beck's troubles were not ended. The war came, and his enemies discovered that the Hydro



Commissioner was of German origin. "He must be interned," they shouted, "he is an enemy," and so on. Meanwhile, Sir Adam—for his King had honoured him with the accolade of Knighthood a month or two before—carried on with important war work. He was created Remount Commissioner, and toured Canada purchasing horses for use of the troops.

It would serve no purpose to continue the story of the persecution of Adam Beck; his enemies may have broken his heart, but his great spirit they never affected. He lost many relatives at the front, but he carried on; his wife, ever his dearest friend and most efficient helpmate, died; but he still carried on. Always in harness, always the servant of the people, he carried on until the end came, and in August, 1925, he died—Colonel The Honourable Sir Adam Beck, Knight Bachelor, LL.D., M.LA., and Cabinet Minister. He was a Great Man and a very Great Canadian. No man ever gave himself more freely in the service of his fellows; no man ever accomplished more for his province.

The Opening of the North-West —and John Norquay

John Norquay

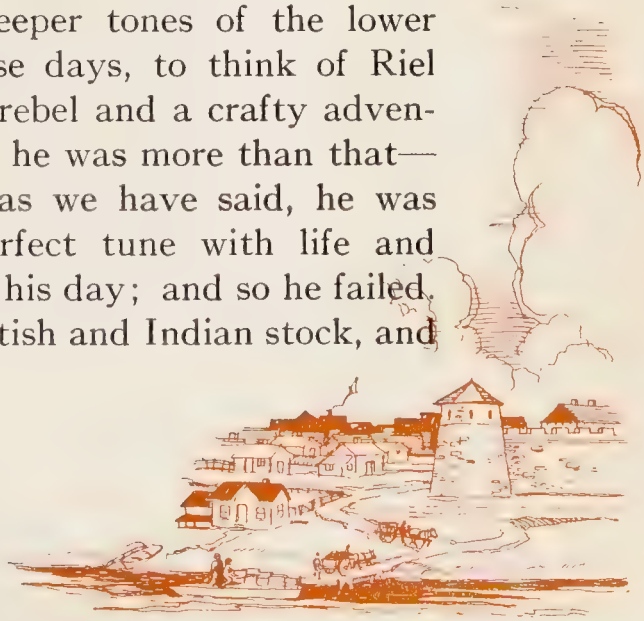
1841-1889

The Opening of the North-West —and John Norquay

It is almost impossible to think of the quiet splendour of John Norquay of Manitoba without comparing his life with that of another prominent figure in the North-West, Louis Riel. Not that there happened to be any resemblance between these two men—they were as dissimilar as it is possible for men to be. But both lived their early lives in a romantic world of uncharted space, amidst conditions of pioneer existence until manhood, when they were confronted with the existence of a strange government.

Louis Riel was of French blood; his father had married an Indian woman, and their son, the man destined to sow such discord and reap such disaster in the far West, showed traces of the genius of each of his parents; but he was eccentric withal and unbalanced. His life was like music produced imperfectly, as though a woman played on a piano a splendid tune with one hand only—omitting the deeper tones of the lower notes. It is foolish, in these days, to think of Riel merely as an outcast and a rebel and a crafty adventurer after personal gain, for he was more than that—far more than that. But, as we have said, he was unbalanced, and out of perfect tune with life and conditions as they existed in his day; and so he failed.

John Norquay was of British and Indian stock, and

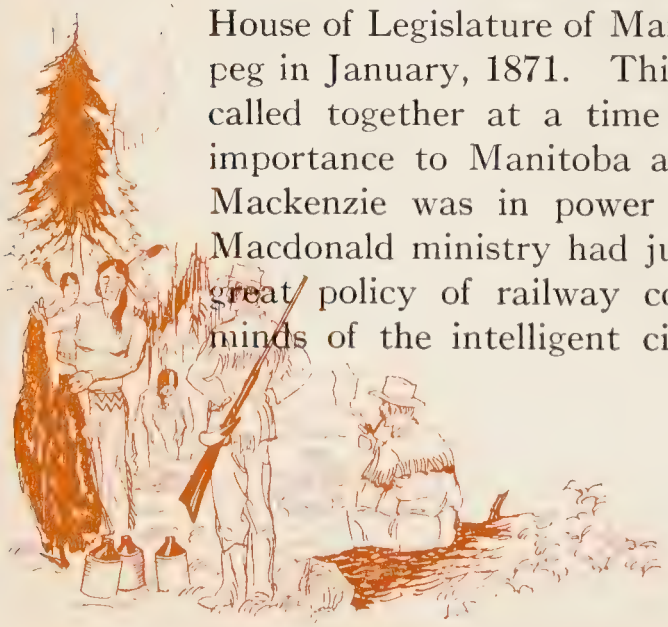


Fort Garry became a town

the possessor of the higher qualities of both the races which gave him ancestry. The Englishman of today is a splendid mixture of the Saxon, the Norman, the Dane; of the Norseman, Roman and the old Celt; to that compound of racial instinct and tradition John Norquay had, intermingled in his being, Indian blood; he claimed relationship on his mother's side with certain chiefs of the natives of the North-West who had ruled Canada before the white men came to trade, to settle, and eventually, to govern.

He was a man whom other men sought out, and, almost involuntarily, placed in circumstance of government and positions of power simply because it appeared obvious that he would not abuse that power, nor misuse his control of governance. His position in Manitoba was similar to the position of Sir Oliver Mowat in Ontario; Norquay remained Prime Minister because he retained the confidence of the people of his province, and continued to justify that confidence until—until men of larger ambition overwhelmed him.

Apart from being a good citizen and a man of outstanding character among the men of mixed blood in the North-West Territories, John Norquay achieved little fame before he was elected a member of the first House of Legislature of Manitoba which met at Winnipeg in January, 1871. This Legislative Assembly was called together at a time which was of exceptional importance to Manitoba and to Canada. Alexander Mackenzie was in power in Ottawa; the John A. Macdonald ministry had just suffered defeat, and the great policy of railway construction was filling the minds of the intelligent citizens. The most popular

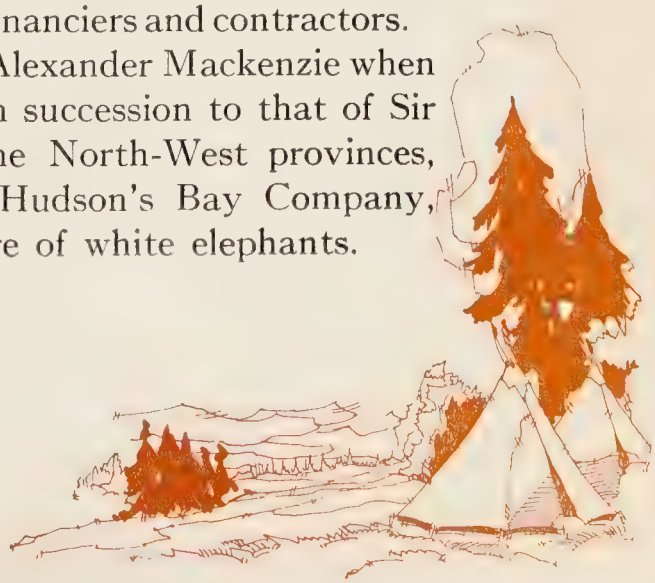


Unscrupulous traders exchanged rum for buffalo robes

project was the construction of a transcontinental line. Such a railway necessarily represented the extension of the power of Canada from east to west, through the great prairie districts; also it represented the first step towards the realization of a great ambition for the formation of a new nation. Only a few years before, the Canadas had been two eastern provinces united only in name; the other provinces, the Maritime Provinces, had been totally outside even the idea of unification. The distances in the new world were appalling; amidst the famine of direct and speedy communication, Halifax in Nova Scotia was nearer to England than it was to Toronto, and it was easier for a man to go from Saint John in New Brunswick to Westminster than it was for him to travel to the western settlements of Upper Canada.

Confederation had given a fresh aspect to the conception of the new frontiers of Canada. Already Ottawa had purchased the North-West Territories, and had realized the possibility of a Dominion spreading from sea to sea, including within its boundaries that El Dorado of the West, the new district of British Columbia. Railways and the building of railways had become not merely a policy of government but a necessity of existence; and from the beginning, because of the importance of the subject, it had proved troublesome to ministers and parliaments as well as to financiers and contractors.

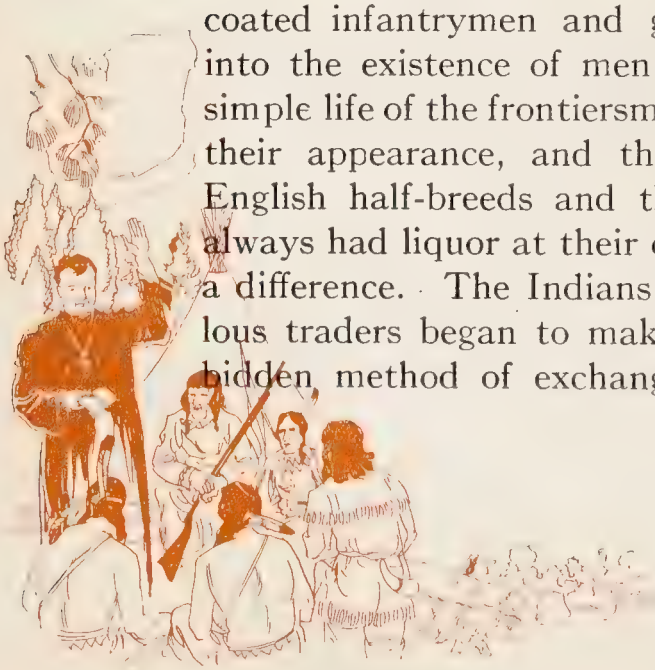
It may have appeared to Alexander Mackenzie when he formed his government in succession to that of Sir John A. Macdonald that the North-West provinces, newly purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company, were somewhat in the nature of white elephants.



There was really little of the Empire builder about Alexander Mackenzie, although he was always a great British patriot; he seemed content to allow matters to drift along while he considered various schemes of communication. What those schemes were and how they failed to eventuate, have little interest to us at this period. They failed—and in the failure was their end.

But tales of these immense differences in the conception of the means and methods by which the great transcontinental railway should link the oceans of the Atlantic and the Pacific filtered through to the North-West provinces—to Manitoba. Geographically, industrially and socially, Manitoba is dependent upon railway communication. Without communication with the outside world, rapid and efficient communication, she would, in spite of her vast richness, even today be starved. How much greater must the menace have appeared in those days of the seventies; then it was not merely a matter of commercial urgency, it was also a matter of protection, of common safety.

The new territories were rapidly becoming populated; to the new country came new men armed with terrific power. Fort Garry became a town, and red-coated infantrymen and green-coated riflemen came into the existence of men who had always lived the simple life of the frontiersman. Drinking saloons made their appearance, and though the French and the English half-breeds and the trading white men had always had liquor at their command, the saloons made a difference. The Indians began to drink; unscrupulous traders began to make much money by the forbidden method of exchanging rum for buffalo robes

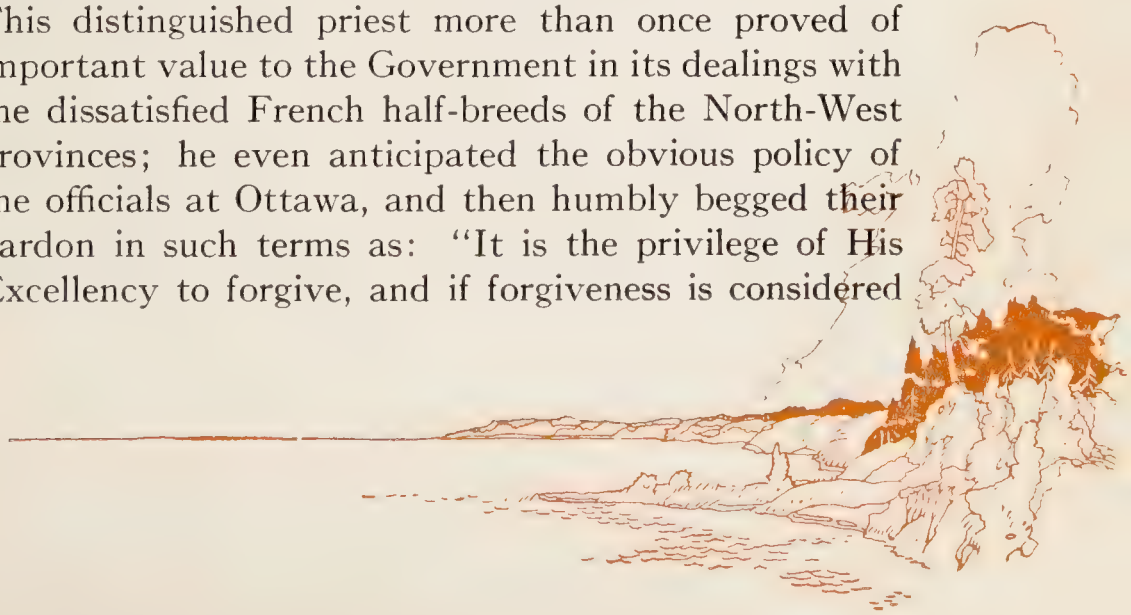


Bishop Taché did splendid work amongst the Indians and half-breeds

with the red man. The change had come; the new methods and factors of life we call civilization had begun to arrive amidst the glories of the primeval forests of the North-West, and these new methods, as is their curious habit, destroyed first, and then attempted in their customary fashion to build anew.

Donald Smith, afterwards Lord Strathcona, was the first Governor of Winnipeg and of the new North-West. His reign lasted only for a day or so, but his influence remained for many months. And it was a good influence, though the man himself was a little autocratic and more than a little selfish. An excellent lawyer-politician from Nova Scotia and Ottawa, Adams George Archibald, arrived in the new territory to take over the reins of governorship from Smith. In spite of a certain personal unpopularity, this Governor proved by no means inefficient in his management of affairs. It was considerably to the advantage of the new province that Archibald was a lawyer as well as a statesman, because it was during the period of his governorship that the laws of Manitoba were framed.

Not the least important personage in Winnipeg in these days was the Roman Catholic Bishop of St. Boniface, in the Red River settlement: Bishop Taché. This distinguished priest more than once proved of important value to the Government in its dealings with the dissatisfied French half-breeds of the North-West provinces; he even anticipated the obvious policy of the officials at Ottawa, and then humbly begged their pardon in such terms as: "It is the privilege of His Excellency to forgive, and if forgiveness is considered



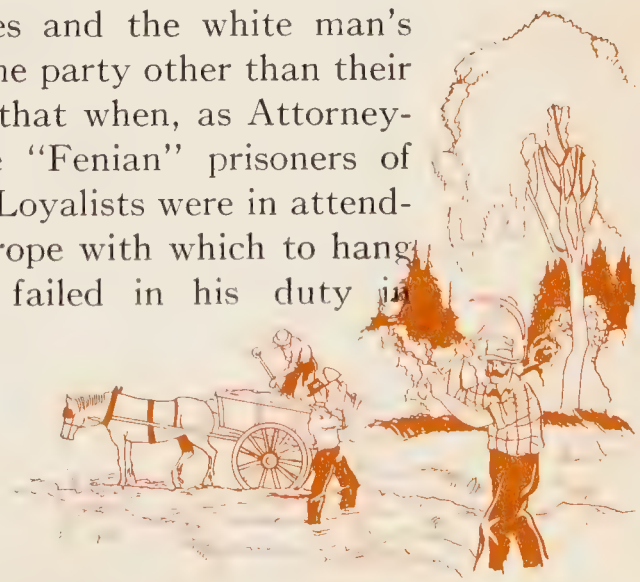
necessary, I earnestly pray for it." This humble disciple of great ecclesiastic diplomats never made a mistake; he was heart to heart in sympathy with his fellow Frenchmen, yet he strongly upheld the Government of Canada and its British influence. His political actions were frequently daring; he risked everything, trusting to the common sense of the ministers in Ottawa to see him through; and he was never disappointed.

When Archibald came to Winnipeg as Lieutenant-Governor he had the advice of such men as Taché and Donald Smith to guide him, and wisely he listened to such counselors. Forthwith he caused a Legislative Assembly to be elected, with the Honourable Henry James Clarke, Q.C., as Attorney-General and Prime Minister; among the men elected to this, the first Parliament of Manitoba, was John Norquay, who represented the constituency of High Bluff. At that time the young native of the North-West was thirty years of age; a young man even in that gathering of youthful legislators whose task it was to create an orderly province out of a wilderness, and to make laws that would be just and permanent; laws acceptable to the people of several nations, in order that the peoples of these different nations might be brought together in unity and governance and be made one people—the people of Manitoba—people of Canada.

As early as 1871 the political leaders of Manitoba and the North-West began urging the Dominion Government to remedy some of the injustices under which they claimed to be suffering at the hands of the Ottawa Parliament. Attorney-General and Prime Minister Clarke arrived at the Capital and urged his

case with skill and vigour, but without material effect. In his interesting *History of the North-West* Alexander Begg explains the purport of this first mission to Ottawa:—"He (Clarke) urged the claims of the Province and the North-West on the Ottawa Government as being superior to those of all the other provinces, for the reason that Manitoba had been left without any Crown Lands, and that her lands and those of the North-West were to be heavily drawn upon for the construction of a national transcontinental railway, taking into the older provinces, who would retain control of their own Crown Lands, the wealth of the great North-West; because, whilst some of the older provinces had not set apart one shilling for immigration, the little Province of Manitoba, without any public lands of her own, had voted in the first year of her existence the very liberal sum of $20,000 for the building of bridges and highways, which were in fact a system of colonization roads, opening a route through the province to the North-West; and $2,000 for the relief of poor and suffering immigrants."

Clarke returned from this mission to find Winnipeg, in fact all Manitoba, in a condition of unrest: the French half-breeds warring with words against the English half-breeds, and he, the Prime Minister, accused by both these parties and the white man's party as well, of favouring some party other than their own. It is stated in history that when, as Attorney-General, he prosecuted three "Fenian" prisoners of French extraction, "a mob of Loyalists were in attendance, one of whom carried a rope with which to hang the Attorney-General if he failed in his duty in



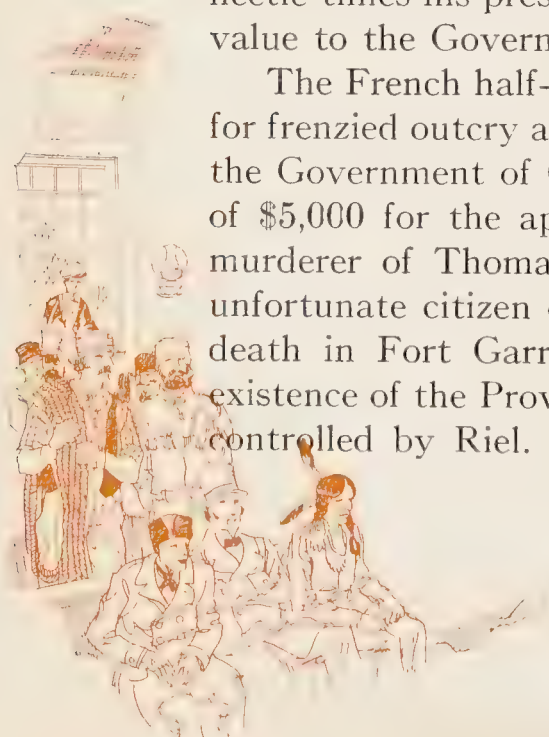
They built roads

obtaining commitment for trial of the prisoners." On the other hand the newspaper *Le Netis* attacked him for his severity in prosecuting the captured malefactors, and accused him of racial prejudice against the men of French ancestry.

Certainly Mr. Clarke's lot was not a happy one, and it was with a view to strengthening his Government by the inclusion of a representative of the English half-breeds that, in December, 1871, John Norquay was invited to join the Cabinet. In a short but graceful speech, the Minister of Public Works, Honourable Alfred Boyd, placed his resignation in the hands of the Lieutenant-Governor, giving as the reason for this action "he had reason to believe that a feeling prevailed among the English half-breed population of the Province that a representative of their race should have a seat at the Council Board, and have a share in the government of the country at the head of a department."

For several years Norquay played his part in governing in a quiet, unobstrusive fashion, and during those hectic times his presence in the Cabinet was of infinite value to the Government.

The French half-breeds had discovered a new cause for frenzied outcry and political threats in the fact that the Government of Ontario suddenly offered a reward of $5,000 for the apprehension and conviction of the murderer of Thomas Scott. Thomas Scott was the unfortunate citizen of Toronto who had been done to death in Fort Garry during the few months of the existence of the Provisional Government organized and controlled by Riel. Scott had been executed after a

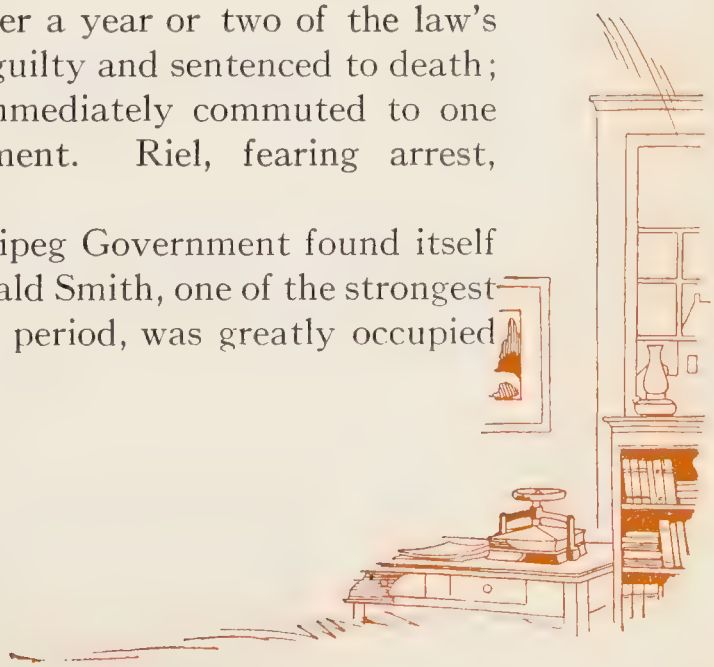


One of them carried a rope with which to hang the Attorney-General

trumpery trial, a trial which represented a mere travesty of justice, and Toronto and Ontario had never forgotten nor forgiven Riel and his rebels. This action by Ontario opened the old wound again, months after the unfortunate occurrence had ceased to disturb the atmosphere of Winnipeg.

Naturally the people of Manitoba were affronted at this act of interference by their Eastern neighbour, and a resolution to that effect was duly passed in the Winnipeg House. But $5,000 was a large reward to go begging, and numerous men of the "get-rich-quickly" temperament laid information before obscure Justices of the Peace, and several grotesque arrests were made, and one or two entirely innocent men were manhandled and insulted. At last a French-Canadian named Lepine, who had acted as Riel's "Adjutant-General" during the brief period of his Provisional Government, was arrested on information presented by informers, and charged with the murder of Scott. It is a fact that emphasizes the curious cross currents which bemused the people of Manitoba in those old days, that while Lepine was being brought for trial in this murder case, his chief, Riel, was being acclaimed as elected for Parliament, representing one of the Manitoba constituencies. After a year or two of the law's delay, Lepine was found guilty and sentenced to death; but this sentence was immediately commuted to one of two years' imprisonment. Riel, fearing arrest, fled the country.

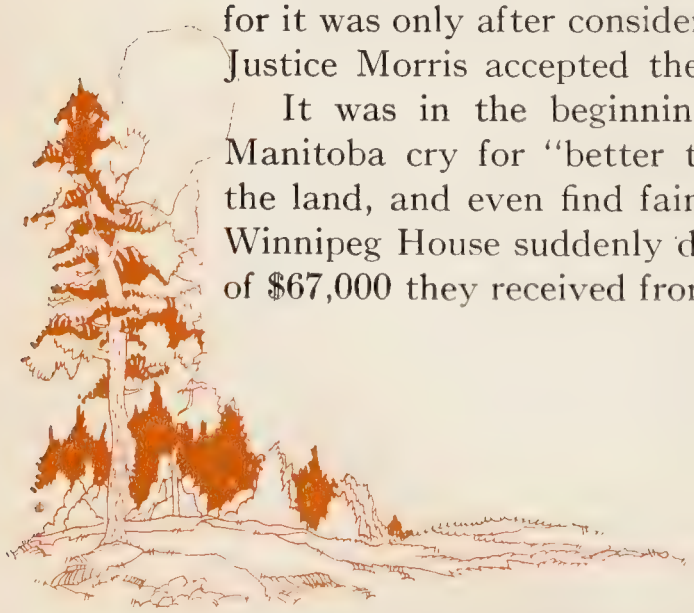
Meanwhile, the Winnipeg Government found itself in troubled waters. Donald Smith, one of the strongest men in the West at that period, was greatly occupied



with affairs at Ottawa and Montreal and in England; Honourable Marc A. Girard, another strong man, was promoted to the Canadian Senate, and in the April of 1872, Archibald, the Lieutenant-Governor, handed in his resignation.

Though Archibald had held his high office for less than two years he probably felt that he had had enough of creating new provinces in the wild and staggering West. His "loyal" people promptly celebrated his resignation by burning his effigy on the main street of Winnipeg with ceremonies "appropriate to the occasion." But he received the official praise of Ottawa; the Governor-General publicly declared "much credit is due to Lieutenant-Governor Mr. Archibald for the legal attainments, the unwearied industry and the fine temper which he brought to bear on the difficulties he had to encounter. He literally encountered the wilderness, but he has cleared the forest and taken out the stumps. Whoever succeeds him . . . with views and objects of his own will have an easy task. He will enter upon the results of another man's intelligent labours, and will probably not have more obstacles in his way than are found in the older settled provinces."

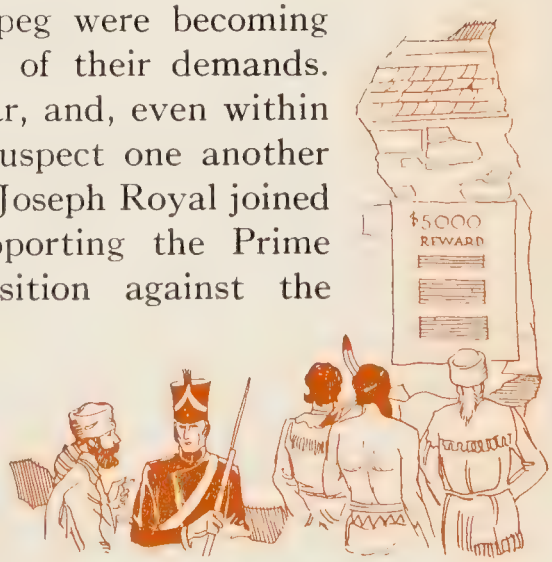
Curiously, no distinguished gentleman seemed eager to come forward and accept the vacant governorship, for it was only after considerable hesitation that Chief Justice Morris accepted the onerous appointment.



It was in the beginning of 1873 that the great Manitoba cry for "better terms" began to persist in the land, and even find faint echoes in Ottawa. The Winnipeg House suddenly discovered that the subsidy of $67,000 they received from the Dominion was a sum

entirely inadequate for the needs of the province, and that the Ottawa Cabinet was neglecting the West, ignoring her claims in regard to expansion, public buildings, immigrants, and the administration of Crown Lands. Attorney-General Clarke made an inspiring speech, in the course of which, he is quoted in the *History of the North-West* as saying: "Let us see what Canada has really secured by her North-West purchase. She has secured complete control of nearly half a continent: she has secured the great highway of the whole world, over which shall teem into her coffers the treasures of two hemispheres, and render her in coming years the sovereign arbitrator among the most powerful nations of the world. What would not the United States give for this great North-West Territory? I venture to say more millions than the Canadian Pacific Railway will cost. Canada may well feel proud of her bargain: she has half a continent for the price of an ordinary coal mine, or of an English nobleman's estate."

The result was that an elaborate list of "better terms" was prepared and taken by a deputation of four members of the Manitoba House to Ottawa. This was in March, 1873, the year of the defeat of the John A. Macdonald Government, and naturally that event delayed the consideration of those "better terms." Members of the House at Winnipeg were becoming restive under the repeated failure of their demands. The Government became unpopular, and, even within the Cabinet, ministers began to suspect one another of being a little less than perfect. Joseph Royal joined the Cabinet, and instead of supporting the Prime Minister led the French opposition against the



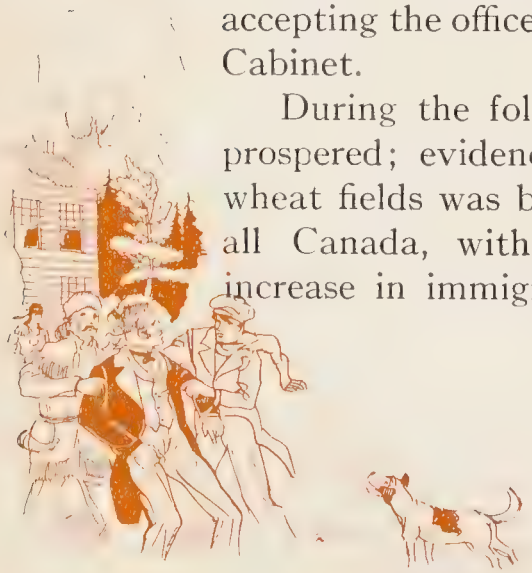
A reward was offered for the apprehension of the murderer of Scott

Government. His action prevented the passing of a bill designed to increase the voting strength of the English-speaking people throughout the province. However, Clarke remained in office, and the House adjourned in November, 1873, to reassemble in July, 1874.

In the interim a political party was formed in Winnipeg with the avowed intention of defeating the Government, and on the reassembly of the House, the Clarke ministry was defeated, and forced to resign. John Norquay was the only member of the Government to defend the Prime Minister—naturally he followed his chief into opposition. The new Government under Girard had but a short span of existence. It resigned in December, 1874, and was replaced by a new ministry under R. A. Davis, the head of the political society which had unseated Clarke.

It was during the period of this Davis Government that Norquay began to take the reins of leadership to which his strong, quiet character entitled him. After the election which followed the creation of the new ministry, Norquay found himself the undisputed Leader of the Opposition. It was the first occasion on which he discovered himself in absolute command, but he sacrificed that position by acceding to the wishes of a majority of his party and of the Government, and accepting the office of Provincial Secretary in the Davis Cabinet.

During the following year affairs of the Province prospered; evidence of the vast value of the Manitoba wheat fields was beginning to attract the attention of all Canada, with the immediate effect of a large increase in immigrants. The Dominion Government



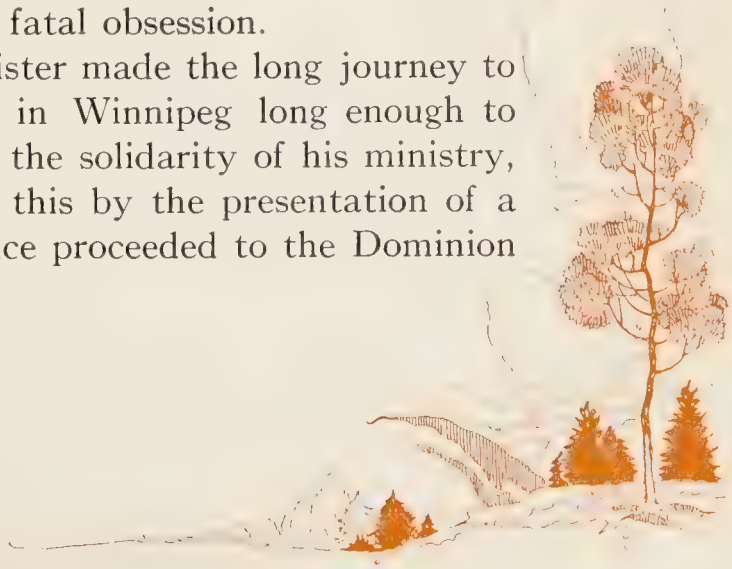
Several grotesque arrests were made

relented to some extent in regard to the "better terms" document, and the Province began to see a definite end to the financial famine which had starved her energies for so long a period.

Norquay came into power in Manitoba in the same year that John A. Macdonald's Government returned to office in Ottawa. During the regime of the Alexander Mackenzie ministry, Manitoba and the North-West had been anxious about the Dominion railway policy. Various routes had been mentioned, and it had become the Liberal Government's policy to favour the use of the Great Lakes to save the cost of line construction. Infinitely more than the East, the West was anxious for the completion of the railway; existence depended upon its early arrival. The farmers were already suffering from a total lack of communication; the delays at Ottawa were a source of the gravest anxiety in Manitoba.

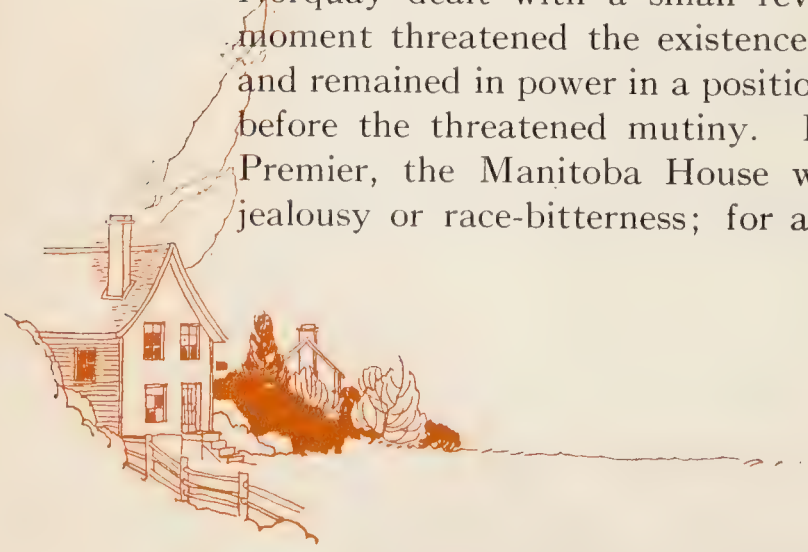
Norquay, grasping this problem, began to evolve a plan for the encouragement of local effort in railway construction. Probably he was not widely informed as to the difficulties confronting the authorities in Ottawa and thought there had been unnecessary delay—as there may have been. But it is from this period that Norquay took such an interest in railway construction that eventually the subject became with him an obsession—in the end a fatal obsession.

The new Prime Minister made the long journey to Ottawa. He remained in Winnipeg long enough to hold an election to test the solidarity of his ministry, and being convinced of this by the presentation of a large majority, he at once proceeded to the Dominion



Capital. Leonard Tilley was the Minister of Finance, and he gave Norquay a fairly sympathetic hearing in regard to "better terms" for his province. The subsidy was to be increased; arrangements for a satisfactory system for the sale of school lands would be introduced; buildings, long called for, would be erected in Winnipeg; but in regard to any system of railway expansion supported by the Provincial Government—a very large and emphatic, no. "As respects the railway policy to be pursued in the province, it has been decided that the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway shall pass south of Lake Manitoba in accordance with the suggestions of Messrs. Norquay and Royal. The Government will oppose the granting of a charter, for the present at least, for any railway in Manitoba other than the one recommended by them, from Winnipeg, southwesterly, to Rock Lake. The Government think it very desirable that all the railway legislation should originate here, and that no charter for a line exclusively within the Province of Manitoba should be granted by its Legislature, without the Dominion Government first assents thereto."

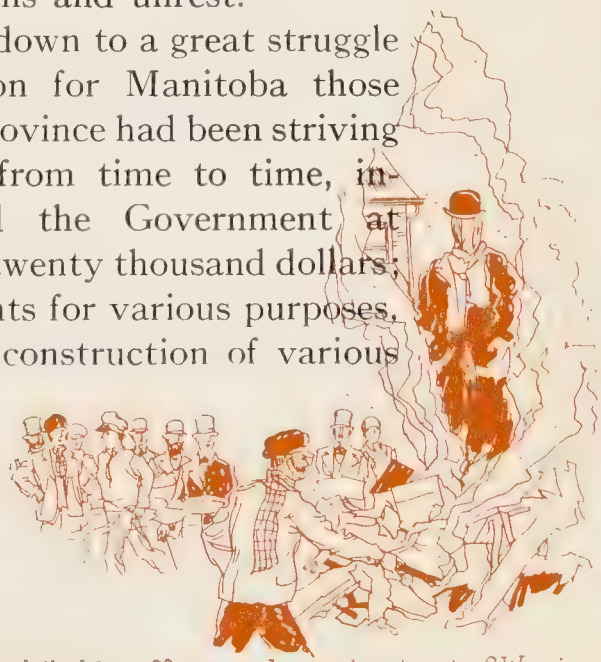
John Norquay and his lieutenant, Royal, returned to Winnipeg well satisfied; the House at Winnipeg received their Prime Minister's report without condemnation, and affairs continued to be prosperous. Norquay dealt with a small revolution which for a moment threatened the existence of his Government, and remained in power in a position stronger even than before the threatened mutiny. In his early days as Premier, the Manitoba House was filled with race-jealousy or race-bitterness; for a considerable period



the French had held the balance of power; and with the advent of Norquay this had been changed. The French were accorded second place in the House, and they never regained power; their vote was never again a serious menace to the English-speaking party. Norquay introduced an important measure to provide for the rearrangement of the various electoral divisions, with a view to the proper distribution of seats according to strength of population. Hitherto many anomalies had existed in this direction, usually greatly to the favour of French constituencies. This bill effecting redistribution was one of so great an importance that the Government determined to appeal to the country to give its verdict to the measure; this was done in the November of 1879, and the result represented a crowning victory for the measure and for Norquay.

The 1879 harvest in the North-West proved so bountiful and of such splendid quality that the Manitoba Government took space in the Dominion Exhibition held at Ottawa that year, and their display of products caused considerable wonder and admiration among those Eastern people who at that time still thought that the West cultivated little that was more valuable than bison and Indians and unrest.

John Norquay now settled down to a great struggle to acquire from the Dominion for Manitoba those "better terms" for which the Province had been striving for ten years. Ottawa had, from time to time, increased the subsidy allowed the Government at Winnipeg by a beggarly ten or twenty thousand dollars; they had even given extra grants for various purposes, and promised to consider the construction of various

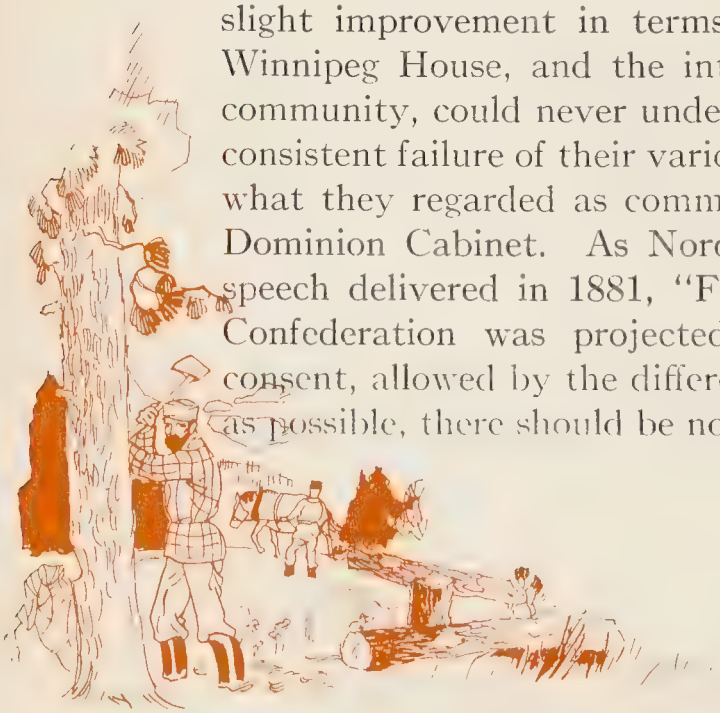


They burned Archibald's effigy on the main street of Winnipeg

buildings "of a suitable character" in the capital of the North-West.

The truth of the matter seemed obvious: Ottawa regarded Manitoba and the North-West as a sort of vassal territory—districts bought and paid for, and in consequence the absolute property of the Dominion Government. The position was humiliating to the Winnipeg Parliament and to the citizens; the white people of the North-West considered they were being treated as a people of inferior understanding. Manitoba was a self-governing province destitute of Crown Lands. Ottawa owned the country, and sold land to citizens and immigrants, pocketing the purchase price, and doling out a small subsidy to the Government at Winnipeg to keep the province in order, and improve it as far as possible.

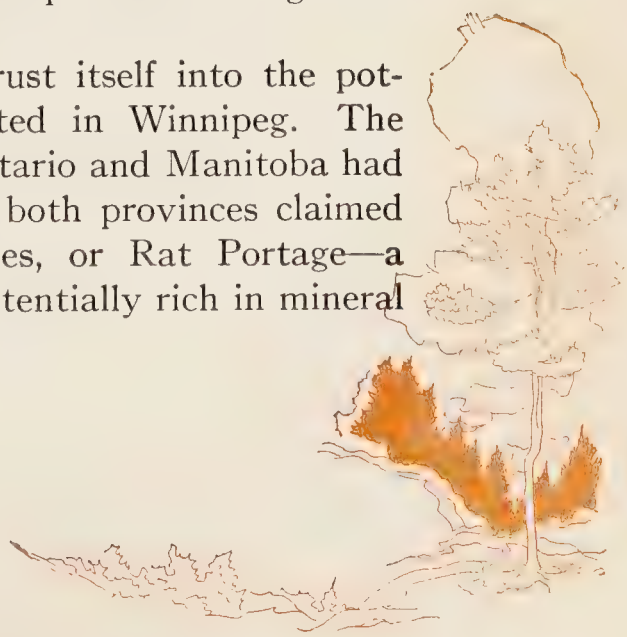
That, roughly, was the position in the North-West in 1880. Mission after mission had been sent to Ottawa to beg for Crown Lands, increased subsidies and so on, with results practically barren of value. Norquay had made the journey once or twice himself, and had always been disappointed, though he had always achieved a slight improvement in terms. The members of the Winnipeg House, and the intelligent members of the community, could never understand the reason for the consistent failure of their various ministers in obtaining what they regarded as commonplace justice from the Dominion Cabinet. As Norquay himself put it in a speech delivered in 1881, "Fourteen years ago, when Confederation was projected, it was, by universal consent, allowed by the different provinces that, as far as possible, there should be no resort to direct taxation



Clearing the forests

for political exigencies; and in order to obviate such a necessity, every province was allowed full control of its public domain, out of which it was expected they would realize a revenue for the purpose of carrying on the affairs of Government, and discharging the responsibilities laid on them by Federal authorities. . . . Manitoba subsequently entered Confederation, and was entitled to equal justice. It has been said that she has been sold by some and bought by others; but, in all fairness, she has certainly been hardly dealt with. I claim that in order to deal with us in that spirit of impartiality which should characterize all administrative bodies, we should have been put in possession of our lands. . . . our public men only looked to the fact that $1,500,000 was paid to the Hudson's Bay Company for whatever rights they had to the public lands of Manitoba and the North-West. The fact was entirely ignored that this amount was added to the public debt of Canada, for which you and I are equally responsible—and the discharge of which we assumed, by being citizens of the Dominion, equally with the citizens of Ontario, Quebec and the other provinces. . . . Taking away our land was taking away that which, having been found a rich source of revenue by the other provinces, would have proved a still greater benefit in our case. . . ."

Another difficulty now thrust itself into the pot-pourri of trouble which existed in Winnipeg. The Eastern boundary dividing Ontario and Manitoba had never been properly defined; both provinces claimed the vast territory of Varennes, or Rat Portage—a country rich in timber, and potentially rich in mineral

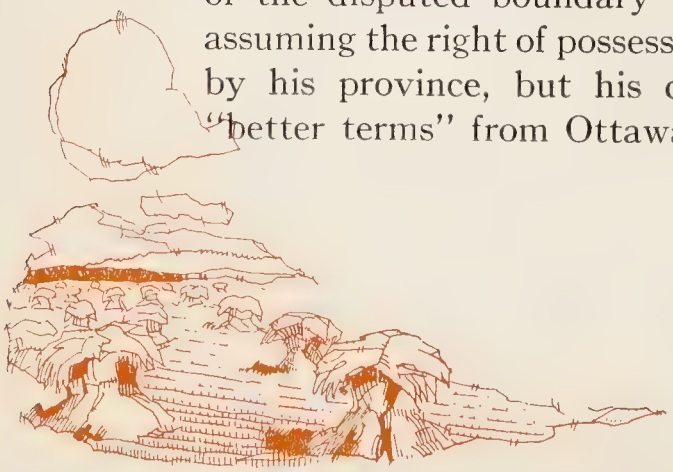


deposits. The claim of Manitoba to this territory was supported by John A. Macdonald, but vigorously disputed by Oliver Mowat and the Ontario Cabinet.

For a time conditions which existed within this disputed territory resembled those usually regarded as peculiar to comic opera; the place was a No-Man's-Land governed by two governments, policed by officers employed by two differing authorities, and subject to the differing by-laws of two provinces. Manitoba, for instance, issued licenses for the sale of alcohol, and permitted the existence of "wide open" hotels. Ontario in this district was "bone dry," and arrested the tavern keepers; Ontario policemen arrested Manitoba policemen, and vice versa; police courts quashed the findings of the other police courts, and fights between law officers for the possession of prisoners were of frequent occurrence. Members of Parliament were elected to represent the district in both the Ontario and the Manitoba Parliaments, and the whole affair was ludicrous, unseemly and impossible.

In the subsequent fight before the Privy Council for the possession of this disputed territory, Ontario won —this matter is dealt with in another place in this volume—but whether the victory came as the result of superior forensic skill or by virtue of common justice, history does not and cannot adequately explain.

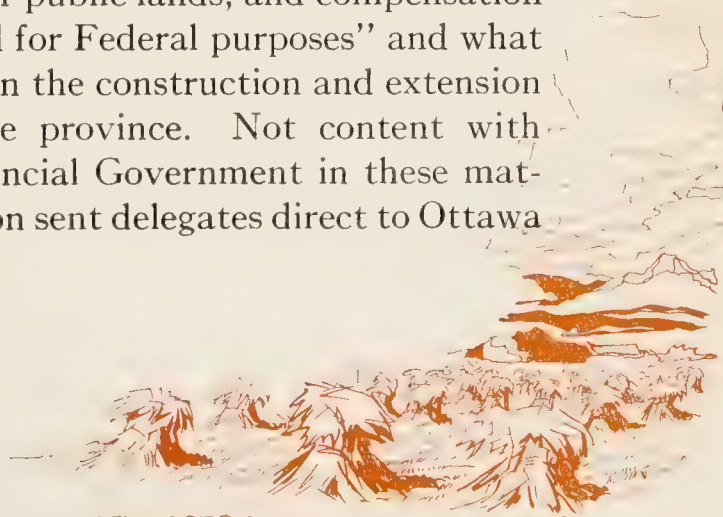
John Norquay took a very active part in this affair of the disputed boundary territory. His attitude in assuming the right of possession was greatly appreciated by his province, but his constant failure to obtain "better terms" from Ottawa continued to disturb the



House. Once again, in 1883, he found himself confronted with severe criticism, and opposition so menacing that, though he won a division in his Parliament, he decided once more to appeal to the country. The result sustained the Norquay ministry, giving the Government twenty out of thirty seats.

And the great struggle went on. Affairs at Rat Portage were developing an additional liveliness. In July, 1883, the Manitoba jail was set on fire, it was alleged by the agents of Ontario—Mowat's Lambs, they were called. When news of this new outrage reached Winnipeg, Norquay—accompanied by an ex-Judge, the Chief of Police and a score of constables—journeyed to Rat Portage, arrested the leaders of the incendiary party, and took them to Winnipeg, where they were charged with "breaking open the jail and releasing the prisoners." This vigorous action renewed Norquay's popularity in his own province, but caused consternation in Ottawa and considerable annoyance in Ontario.

A large political body, representing the agricultural interests, was rapidly increasing in strength throughout Manitoba. Members of this party—the Manitoba and North-West Farmer's Union—were intent in their agitation for not only "better terms" but the best terms. They waited on Norquay and his Cabinet and demanded for the province, among other details, "absolute control of her public lands, and compensation for lands sold and used for Federal purposes" and what amounted to freedom in the construction and extension of railways within the province. Not content with approaching the Provincial Government in these matters, the Farmer's Union sent delegates direct to Ottawa



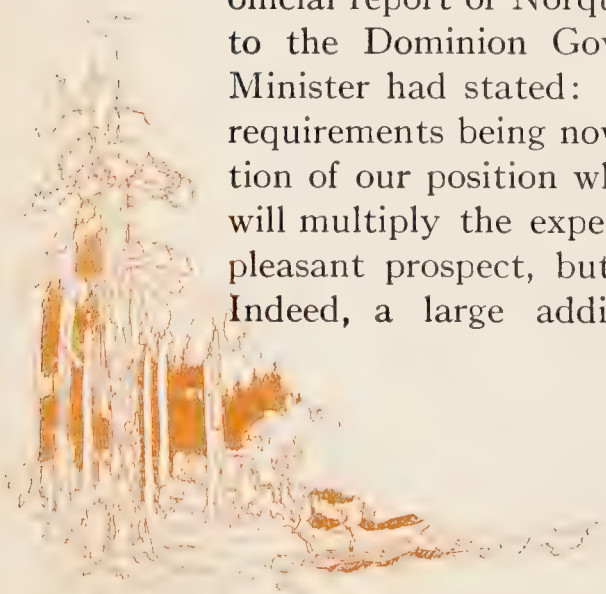
The 1879 harvest proved bountiful

and interviewed Sir John A. Macdonald. This action naturally constituted a serious affront on Norquay, and indicated that various powerful organizations within his province were beyond his control.

Failing at Ottawa the Union called a mass convention to be held at Winnipeg; with the objects of this convention Norquay expressed his entire sympathy, only begging the leaders "to be moderate in their deliberations, avoiding all that could be construed as demagogism," reminding them that determined but constitutional agitation was better calculated to gain results than angry declamation or idle threats.

In spite of this warning the Union at the Convention succeeded in passing a resolution to the effect: "In view of the burdens laid on the people of Manitoba. . . agricultural operations cannot be made to yield a profit; that immigration before the removal of these burdens, will benefit neither the province nor the immigrants. . . ." This baleful resolution was published broadcast; it was even printed in different languages and circulated throughout European countries.

The citizens of Winnipeg and the Board of Trade indignantly repudiated this anti-immigration resolution; but the Farmer's Union justified it by quoting an official report of Norquay's, forwarded the year before to the Dominion Government, in which the Prime Minister had stated: "The provision allowed for our requirements being now so inadequate, the contemplation of our position when a great influx of population will multiply the expense of Government is far from a pleasant prospect, but is a fact that must be faced. Indeed, a large addition to the population of the



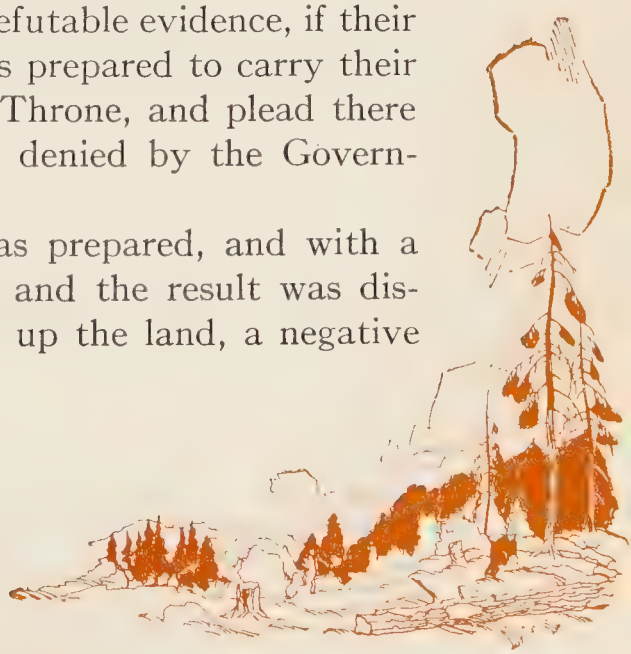
The country in the Rat Portage district was rich in timber

province would be nothing short of an evil in disguise; the rapid settlement of the territory would prove anything but a blessing. . . ."

The Farmer's Union anti-immigration resolution was passed in 1884. During that year Norquay resumed and increased his appeals to Ottawa for justice —for control of the lands, for the extension of the boundaries, and so on. But the Ottawa Cabinet was not only deaf to his appeals—it was also somewhat impatient at his pertinacity in petitioning.

Norquay returned to the Winnipeg Legislature in March, 1884, empty handed. In masterly fashion he reviewed the position to the House in a speech which moved even the Leader of the Opposition to an expression of admiration; this gentleman "complimented him and congratulated the country on having for a leader a man who thus fearlessly stood forth as the champion of its rights." Norquay had said that "his native province had been deprived of her rights from the moment she entered Confederation—robbed of her heritage of broad and fertile acres, even before her birth as a province—she had been made the victim for the benefit of the Eastern provinces, by both parties in Dominion politics; now, having presented the case of Manitoba, supported by irrefutable evidence, if their demands were ignored, he was prepared to carry their grievances to the foot of the Throne, and plead there for the justice that had been denied by the Government of Canada."

Another great petition was prepared, and with a deputation, sent to Ottawa; and the result was disappointment: refusal to give up the land, a negative



answer almost abrupt in character. In essence it meant "the Government of Canada bought the land of Manitoba from the Hudson's Bay Company, and thus has the right to retain possession."

Though certain concessions were offered by the Dominion Government, the Winnipeg House passed a resolution unanimously declining to accept the propositions, and Norquay forthwith introduced a bill providing for direct taxation; this measure immediately passed its first and second readings without discussion. The object of this drastic movement was to meet a large deficit in the budget, and its meaning, and the necessity of its introduction, was explained by Norquay in a circular which was distributed throughout the province.

In the autumn of 1884 the decision of the Imperial Privy Council in regard to the Ontario boundary was delivered—it was adverse to the claims of Manitoba—and in December of the same year Norquay attended a great Conservative demonstration in honour of Sir John A. Macdonald in Toronto.

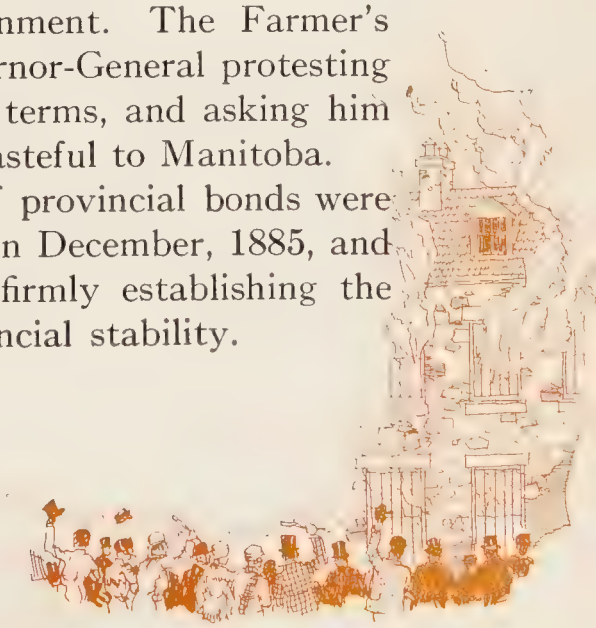
The visit to Ontario's capital was made much of by Norquay's enemies; indeed—no doubt much to his astonishment—he was accused of making secret bargains with the Dominion Government by which the interests of Manitoba were to be sacrificed to serve his own purposes. In the early months of 1885 Norquay and Murray, the Speaker of the Winnipeg House, attended at Ottawa in furtherance of the Manitoba demands.

Norquay returned to Winnipeg to meet his Parliament in March, 1885, with another increase in the

sum payable by Ottawa to Manitoba. There is no doubt that this visit to Ottawa had considerably modified his opinions in regard to the offers of the Dominion Government. He made a long and brilliant speech recapitulating all the efforts he had made towards obtaining "better terms." He claimed to have at last obtained for Manitoba a position she had never held before in the Dominion, and contended that the offer now made to the province justified the people of Manitoba in accepting it. It seems at this distance that the change of attitude on the part of the Prime Minister justified the damaging criticism of the Leader of the Opposition; a criticism devoid of personalities, but based entirely on figures—though it is knowledge in politics that figures can be so manipulated that they can be made to prove anything. Norquay's motion of acceptance was passed by a substantial majority, and the House adjourned, the members singing "God Save the Queen."

The acceptance by the Norquay Government of this "better terms" agreement raised a storm of protest throughout the province. Meetings of the Farmer's Union and a dozen other societies which came into existence, condemned their Prime Minister, his Government, and the Ottawa Government. The Farmer's Union sent a wire to the Governor-General protesting against the acceptance of the terms, and asking him not to ratify a measure so distasteful to Manitoba.

Meanwhile the first issue of provincial bonds were placed on the English market in December, 1885, and they proved a great success, firmly establishing the recognition of Manitoba's financial stability.



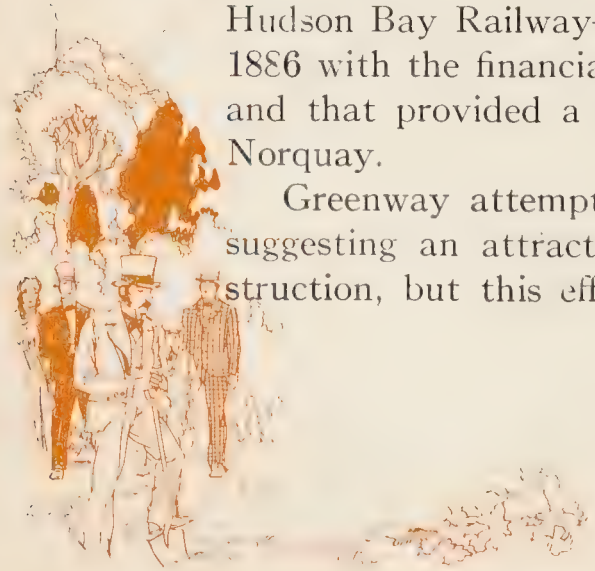
The Manitoba jail was set on fire

From this time on to the year 1887, the year of Norquay's retirement, the Opposition, though hopelessly outnumbered in the House, were able to carry on a policy of irritating and damaging criticism. Voicing the opinion of the province in general, Greenway, Leader of the Opposition, was able to pursue Norquay in regard to railway expansion. Provincial construction of new lines had always been a strong plank in the Prime Minister's platform, and when in March, 1886, Ottawa disallowed the construction of a proposed Manitoba line, Greenway had an excellent opportunity of damaging attack.

An attempt was made to prove certain financial irregularities against Norquay and some of his ministers; though this charge was proved to be false, it necessitated a judicial enquiry, and such charges, though untrue, are damaging as well as irritating to public men. The Prime Minister was not gaining in popularity, yet, in a general election held in December, 1886, his Government was returned to power with twenty-one supporters as against fourteen who went with the Opposition.

The "better terms" episode had been almost forgotten in a fever for railway expansion which absorbed the attention of the province. A new line—the Hudson Bay Railway—had been started in the fall of 1886 with the financial assistance of the Government, and that provided a renewed lease of popularity for Norquay.

Greenway attempted to form a new ministry by suggesting an attractive programme of railway construction, but this effort was negatived by Norquay,



Norquay turned the first sod for the Red River Railway

who brought in a bill to incorporate the Manitoba Central Railway Company, with powers to build from Winnipeg in a southerly direction, and a line from Winnipeg to Portage La Prairie. This bill passed without opposition, and was forwarded to Ottawa. Afterwards Norquay introduced a bill for the construction of the Red River Valley Railway, under the impression, apparently, that with so many railway projects in the air, one at least would reach fruition.

George Stephen, President of the C.P.R., telegraphed violent protests to Norquay, threatening to remove his principal Western workshops from Winnipeg if the new measures were pursued; but Norquay replied in dignified terms, saying that he was acting for the province, uninfluenced by the C.P.R.'s attitude in regard to Winnipeg.

The Dominion Government refused to give consent to the construction of these provincial lines, but Norquay and his Government resolved on the building of the Red River Line in defiance of Ottawa; and the people of Manitoba applauded their decision.

In the teeth of the most violent opposition from the Dominion Government and the C.P.R., Norquay turned the first sod of the Red River Valley Railway on July 2nd, 1887. The Governor-General joined in the chorus of criticism against the new line; he even invoked the aid of the Imperial Parliament. Sir John Thompson joined in the fray, applying for an injunction on the ground that the line was being constructed over Dominion lands without the consent of the Dominion.

Meanwhile Norquay, and his lieutenant Lariviere, were absent in the East trying to raise money for the

construction of this line. In this endeavour they were, perhaps not unnaturally, entirely unsuccessful.

Norquay returned to Winnipeg and attempted to meet the financial crisis by the issue of provincial bonds to the value of $300,000. This attempt also met with failure—only a very few bonds were ever taken up.

The last effort Norquay made was to make an arrangement with a contractor to construct the road, and complete it "unless prevented by legal or military force" by June, 1888. And that was the end of power so far as Norquay was concerned.

A man who had made a success as the guiding hand of his province during many years of her youthful progress, Norquay failed politically at last on the railway question—as many a statesman and minister and politician had done before him. He could not have properly appreciated the importance or the difficulties confronting Ottawa in the fight for the completion of the first transcontinental route. If his local projects had been successful, the completion of the C.P.R. might have been retarded —with serious results to the Dominion. But the Westerner failed, and the C.P.R. was built in time. Norquay retired from public life in 1887, having held the high office of Prime Minister of Manitoba continuously since 1878.

In 1889 John Norquay died; he had proved himself a valiant fighter for his province, and a man who greatly loved his country.

It was most unfortunate that circumstances caused this great man to fall from power at the age of forty-six; it was tragic that such a strong man should die—probably of a broken heart—at the early age of forty-eight. But, he was a Great Canadian.

The Royal North-West Mounted Police

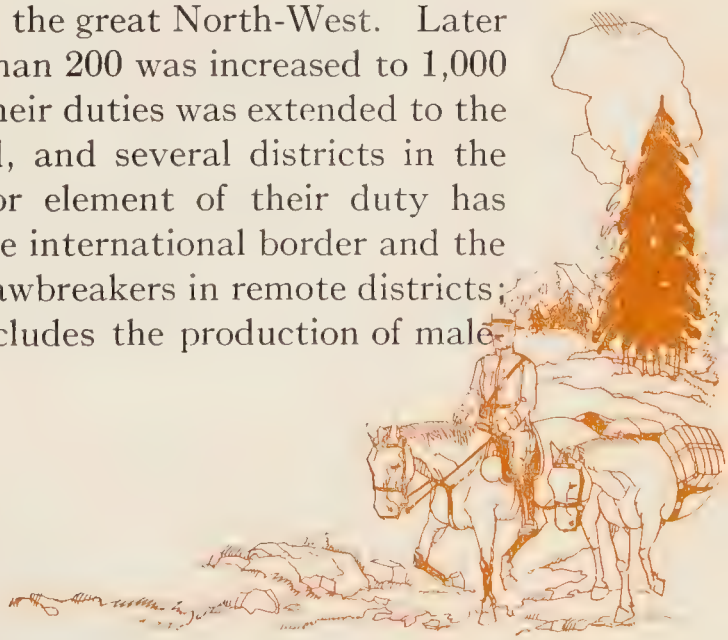
Lieut.-Col. James F. Macleod

1836-1894

The Royal North-West Mounted Police

THE Royal North-West Mounted Police gained for themselves a wide-world fame, not only by reason of their gallantry and calm courage in carrying out their duties, but also because no other body of men ever existed and worked under so strict a system of discipline and *esprit de corps* and maintained for their corps such a high reputation for bravery and individual intelligence of all its members. In this respect these North-West policemen have acquired distinction which is unique in history. We frequently forget the extreme youthfulness of this force—now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—which, formed in 1873, has not yet attained the sixtieth year of its existence.

When the Dominion Government first organized this quasi-military body, only 190 men were enlisted. Its immediate object was the preservation of the law in the new settlements in the great North-West. Later this inadequacy of less than 200 was increased to 1,000 men, and the sphere of their duties was extended to the Yukon, Herschell Island, and several districts in the distant Arctic. A major element of their duty has been the protection of the international border and the discovery and arrest of lawbreakers in remote districts; this part of their duty includes the production of male-



Their lonely journeys

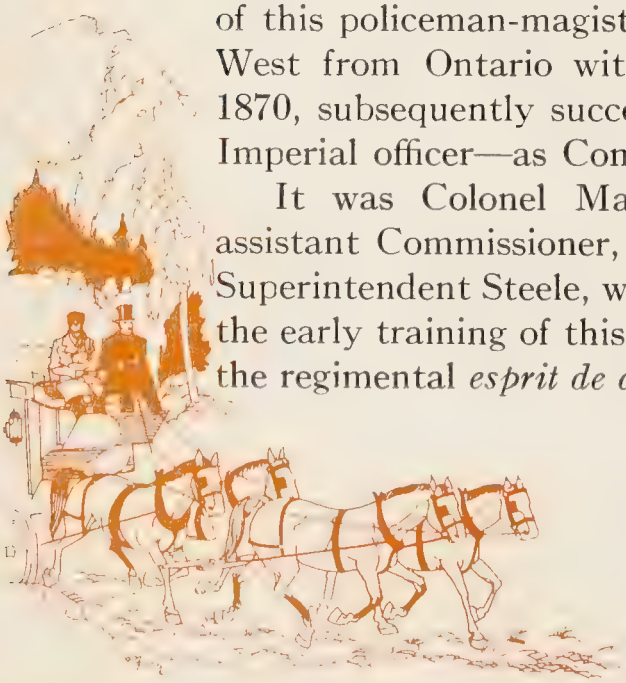
factors within civilized centres for proper trial. We are all familiar with some of the outstanding actions of these red-coated Riders of the Plains; we know of their remarkable lonely journeys in the interests of justice or in the interests of humanity; we know the stories of the power they exercise, of their extraordinary power and influence on the Indians long before the Indians had forsaken war as a profession or become reconciled to the rule of the white man.

What school boy is not familiar with the wonderful and inspiring leadership of the officers and non-commissioned officers who formed and trained the North-West Mounted Police, especially perhaps with the leadership of Lieut.-Colonel James Farquharson Macleod?

Macleod was not only an officer and a most admirable gentleman, he was also one of the most striking of the earlier pioneers of the West. When he ceased to be the Chief Commissioner of Police, he became Stipendiary Magistrate for the North-West Territories, and delivered justice in courts at Pincher Creek, Macleod and Lethbridge.

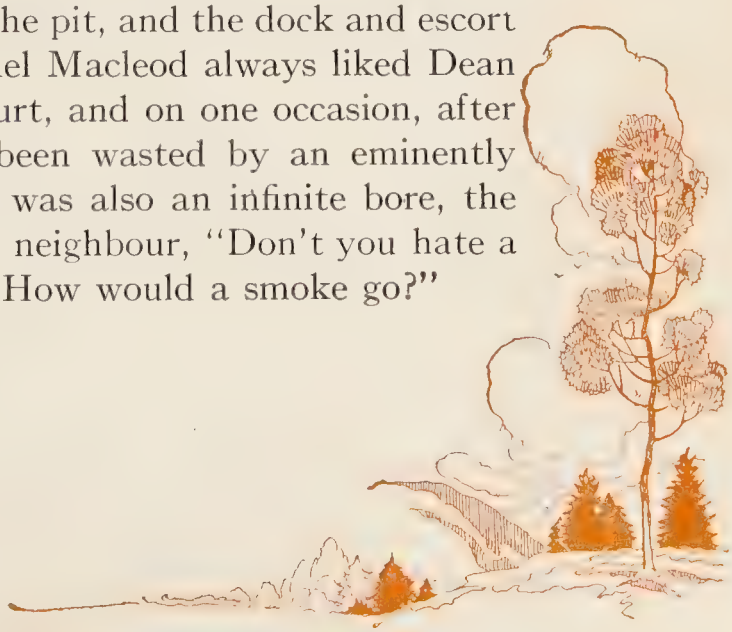
Many scores of good stories are in existence in regard to the common sense, good nature and *bonhomie* of this policeman-magistrate. Originally he had gone West from Ontario with the Wolseley expedition of 1870, subsequently succeeding Sir George French—an Imperial officer—as Commissioner of the Police.

It was Colonel Macleod, assisted by the then assistant Commissioner, Lieut.-Col. A. G. Irvine, and Superintendent Steele, who were mainly responsible for the early training of this force, and for the existence of the regimental *esprit de corps*.



Frequently he would drive the four-in-hand himself

An early adjutant of the force, Captain Dean, in an interesting volume, *Mounted Police Life in Canada*, has put on record many intimate and interesting incidents in the early days of the force. Dean has much to record of the interesting character of Colonel Macleod. We learn from him that, when the Colonel had become the Stipendiary Magistrate, it was his custom to journey from one court to another in the manner of a sporting gentleman of the old days. On such occasions he would cover the thirty-two miles of road either by means of a convenient police team or he would mount the tri-weekly stage coach, take the reins from "Polly," the stage driver—the driver's name being Pollinger he was naturally known as Polly—and drive the four horses himself. The Court would be held in any convenient place—a room in the hotel, but more often in the police barracks. Sometimes Dean would call for the Judge and drive him to his Court room. "I always carried with me a little pig-skin bag which contained a small glass, corkscrew, a bottle of soda water, a little wee drop of the 'crater,' a pouch of tobacco, my own pipe and some matches. We knew that the place we were going to was desolate, and that we must provide our own creature comforts." The Judge sat on the stage, the barristers' table was just across the footlights in the pit, and the dock and escort just beyond . . . Colonel Macleod always liked Dean to sit beside him in Court, and on one occasion, after a whole morning had been wasted by an eminently respectable citizen who was also an infinite bore, the Judge whispered to his neighbour, "Don't you hate a conscientious witness. How would a smoke go?"



"Just the thing to sustain us both," replied Dean. "Very well," said the Judge, "Gentlemen, the Court adjourns for ten minutes," and he slid off the bench and retired to the wings to test the recuperating power of the little brown bag.

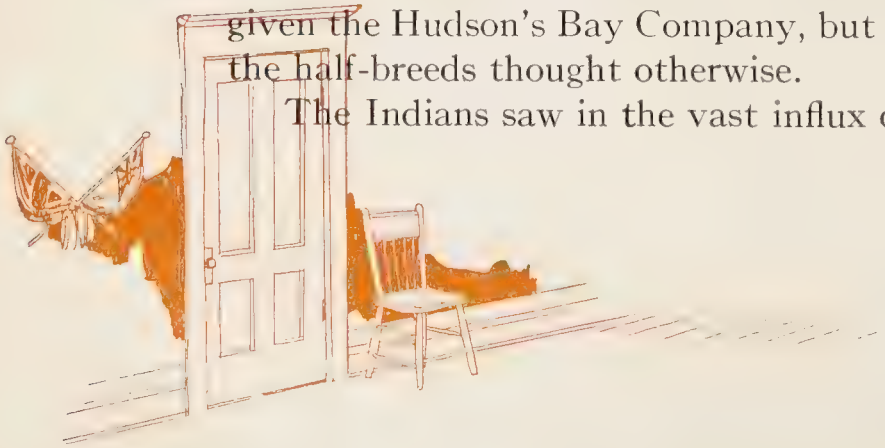
In those days of the lonely plains and the stalwart, adventurous pioneer, men were accustomed to a more bohemian existence than is possible to their grandchildren.

A man of unblemished reputation and splendid character, it is easy to imagine how popular an officer of this description would be among men of the calibre of the troopers he commanded in the police.

During the periods when Macleod was Commissioner of Police, various treaties were being enacted between the Canadian authorities and the various Indian tribes regarding the surrender of vast fertile territories by their Indian occupants. Few more extraordinary episodes than these occur in the history of the Dominion. The Indians throughout the West were undergoing a series of transitions which were destined to be of epoch-making importance.

The Hudson's Bay Company had recently sold the whole of the West, east of the Rockies, to the Dominion Government. That was a transaction in which the Indians were not asked to take a share, to offer a suggestion or to make a protest. Perhaps it was natural that the Government at Ottawa imagined that they had bought the North-West for the large sum they had given the Hudson's Bay Company, but the Indians and the half-breeds thought otherwise.

The Indians saw in the vast influx of white settlers

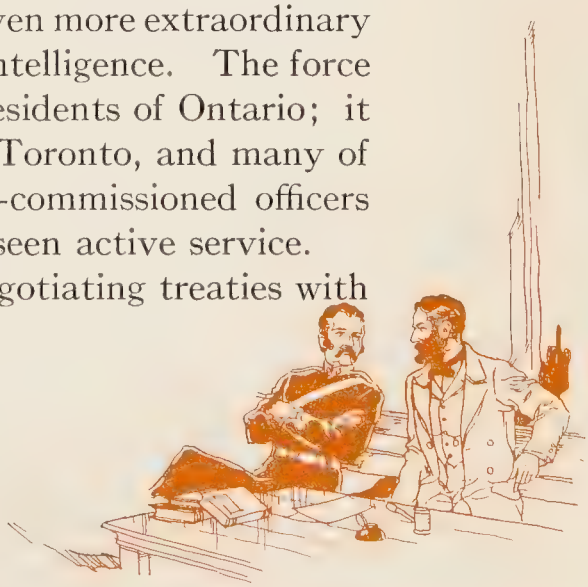


the inevitable destruction of their hunting grounds; they saw, with the cultivation of their hunting grounds the elimination of the bison—the animal on which they had always relied for subsistence; they also imagined that an end would come to those rich fur-bearing animals whose pelts they had been collecting and using for domestic or trade purposes for generations.

Also the whiskey trader had arrived, and contrary to the law of the West, was serving his "fire water" to Indians without much restraint. The fiery spirit appealed to the melancholy nature of the romantic "braves," and the younger men and women fell early victims to the Yankee liquor smugglers. It was largely to destroy that trade, and to remove its effect upon the Indians, that the North-West Mounted Police was formed. Obviously, in such a country under those extraordinary and disturbed conditions, the new force had to be a body of worthy men. Above all, the officers had to be men above suspicion, to be men of intelligence, skilled in diplomacy.

All the officers came up to that level, from the first Commissioner, General French, by way of the second Commissioner, Colonel Macleod, to the junior Inspectors—and that high tradition of intelligence and integrity obtains to this day. The non-commissioned officers were, and are, probably even more extraordinary in their evidence of the highest intelligence. The force was largely recruited from the residents of Ontario; it was in the first place trained in Toronto, and many of the men who joined were ex-non-commissioned officers of the Imperial forces who had seen active service.

In the delicate business of negotiating treaties with

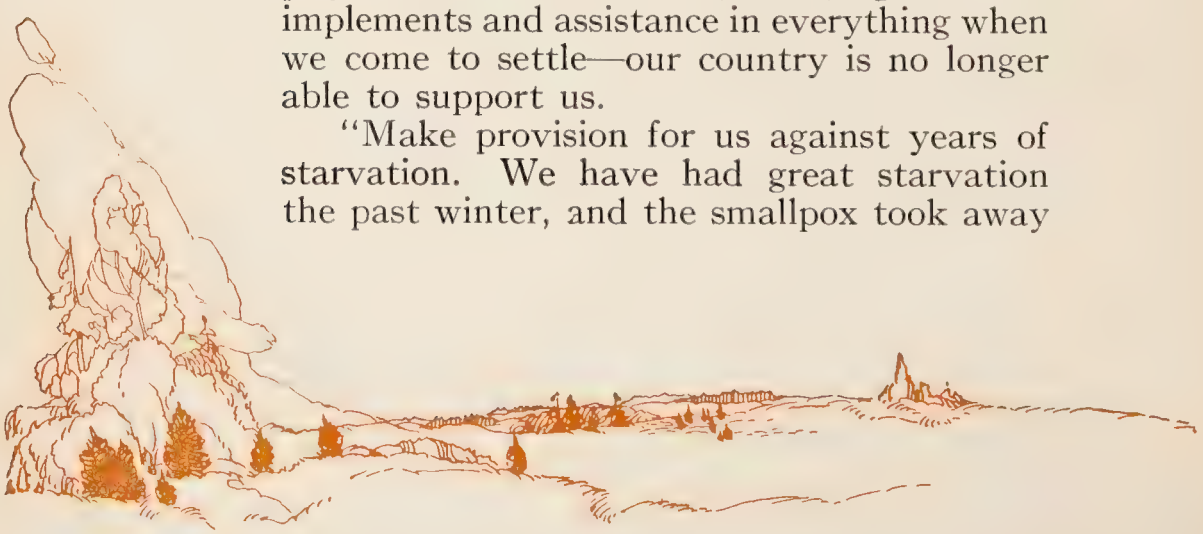


"How would a smoke go?" he said.

the Indians the Government authorities relied very largely upon the experienced officers of the Police to facilitate the proceedings and to steady the crowds of chiefs and warriors, who were by no means pleased at parting with their country. The natives had already found that in the policeman's word they could have confidence, so the red-coats of the Plains acted as extra ambassadors to the red-skins of the Prairies and the Forests.

In his valuable *History of Saskatchewan and the Old North-West*, Doctor Norman Fergus Black is able to print an interesting document relating to one of the treaty meetings—those meetings and treaties by which the red man ceded to the white man his territorial rights:—

> "Messages from the Cree Chiefs of the Plain, Saskatchewan, to His Excellency, Governor Archibald, our Great Mother's representative at Fort Garry, Red River Settlement.
>
> 1. *The Chief Sweet Grass*, the chief of the country. Great Father: I shake hands with you, and bid you welcome. We heard our lands were sold, and we did not like it; we don't want to sell our lands; it is our property, and no one had a right to sell them. Our country is getting ruined of fur-bearing animals hitherto our sole support, and now we are poor and want help—we want you to pity us. We want cattle, tools, agricultural implements and assistance in everything when we come to settle—our country is no longer able to support us.
>
> "Make provision for us against years of starvation. We have had great starvation the past winter, and the smallpox took away



many of our people, the old, young and children. We want you to stop the Americans coming to trade on our lands, and giving fire water, ammunition and arms to our enemies, the Blackfeet.

"We made a peace this winter with the Blackfeet. Our young men are foolish; it may not last long. We invite you to come and see us and speak with us. If you can't come yourself, send someone in your place.

"We send these words by our master, Mr. Christie, in whom we have every confidence. That is all."

2. *Ki-he-win, The Eagle.*

"Great Father: Let us be friendly. We have never shed any white man's blood, and have always been friendly with the whites, and want workmen, farmers and carpenters to assist us when we settle. I want all my brother Sweet Grass asks. That is all."

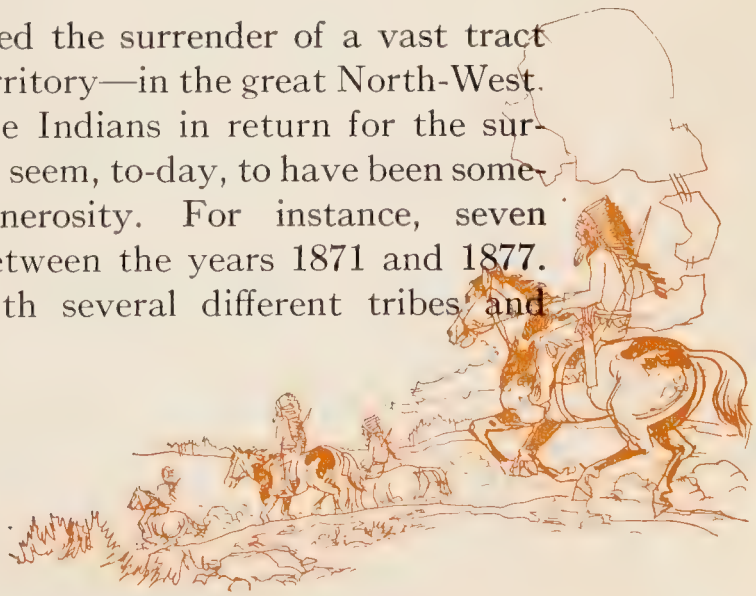
3. *The Little Hunter.*

"You, my brother, the Great Chief on Red River, treat me as a brother."

4. *Kos-ki-on*, or *Short Tail.*

"My brother that is coming close, I look upon you, as if I saw you; I want you to pity me, and I want help to cultivate the ground for myself and my descendants. Come and see us."

This treaty involved the surrender of a vast tract of territory—fertile territory—in the great North-West. The terms granted the Indians in return for the surrender of their country seem, to-day, to have been somewhat lacking in generosity. For instance, seven treaties were made between the years 1871 and 1877. These were made with several different tribes and



Red-skins of the Prairies

involved all the land extending from the west of Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains.

The terms accepted by the Indians for the surrender of this country in perpetuity were: payment to each chief of an annuity of twenty-five dollars, to each of the head men fifteen dollars, and each other member of the band, five dollars. In addition adequate reserves were to be provided, agricultural implements supplied, and special schools were to be established on the reserves. Under certain conditions the Indians were to be allowed to hunt on unoccupied territory. In many cases it became necessary for the Dominion authorities to supplement these terms by substantial gifts of food, for the bison had already begun to disappear before the inroads of the white settler.

As a rule the Indian is not a very enthusiastic or competent agriculturist. Therefore, when he was deprived of the game which always had represented his staple article of food, he began to starve. The condition of most of the tribes was bad; the members were greatly depressed; their numbers were constantly being depleted by smallpox and other contagious diseases unknown in the country before the advent of the white man; and a great number had developed a taste for "fire water" which caused much unrest and inconvenience.

That the Indians were fully aware of the value of the territories they were relinquishing is evidenced by a speech made by a chief while discussing the treaty terms.

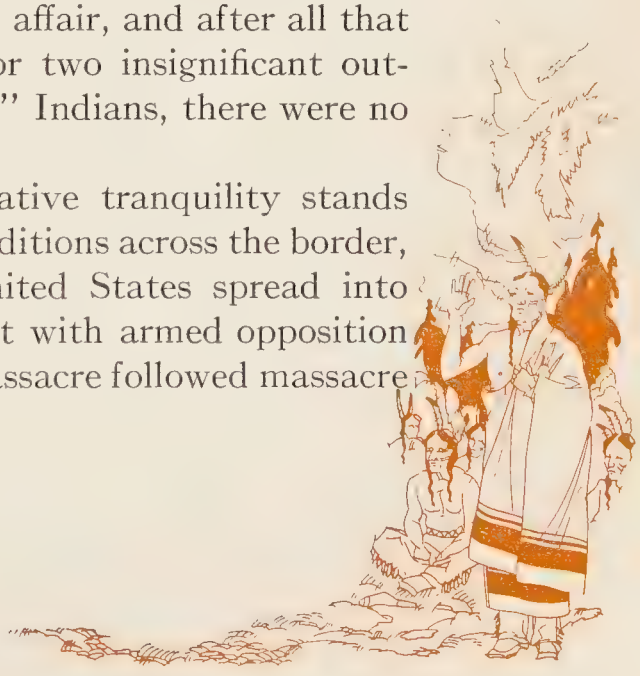
"My terms I am now going to lay down before you: the decision of our chiefs. The sound of the rustling

of the gold is under my feet where I stand. We have a rich country; it is the Great Spirit who gave us this. Where we stand upon is the Indians' property, and belongs to them. If you grant us our requests, you will not go back without making the treaty."

At this period the position of the British and the French half-breeds was little better than that of the Indians. Many of these joined issue with the Indians, took part in their deliberations and finally settled down to the comparative tranquility of the Indian reserves. Others took part in the Riel rising, but after a little time the majority settled down to some occupation which produced for them the necessities of life through more or less congenial work. Hundreds if not thousands spread northwards beyond the encroach of the white man, and a small group went to Egypt to assist the British voyageurs in the Nile expedition. One or two achieved fame in the service of the province, especially was this the case with the Honourable John Norquay, for many years Prime Minister of Manitoba.

A most important historical fact to remember in connection with the development of the North-West is that it was accomplished without sanguinary fighting. With the exception of the Riel affair, and after all that was a small affair, and one or two insignificant outbursts by small bands of "bad" Indians, there were no serious disturbances.

This condition of comparative tranquility stands out in vivid contrast to the conditions across the border, for as the settlers of the United States spread into Indian territory they were met with armed opposition of the most violent nature. Massacre followed massacre

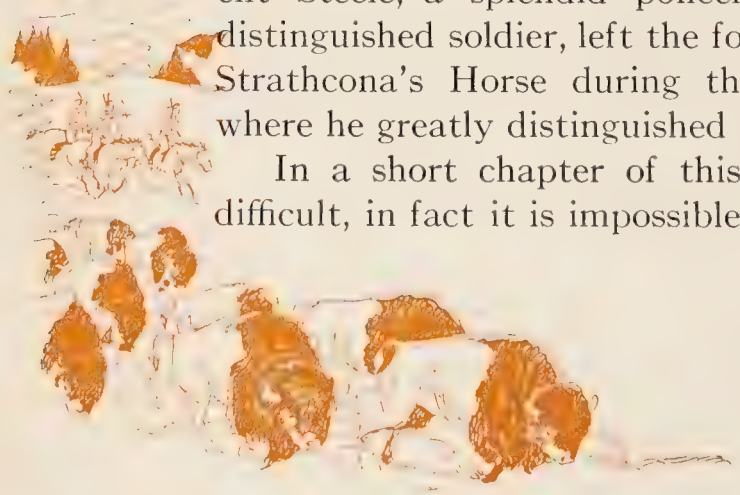


"My terms I lay down before you"

and pitched battles were of almost daily occurrence; then came into existence in the States organized companies of Westerners called Indian fighters; whereas in Canada there have never been Indian fighters; instead we have used the Mounted Police to protect the Indian, rather than to fight him, and generally to preserve peace.

As we have written, the work of administration during the period of evolution of the wild North-West into the various progressive Canadian provinces was accomplished by a remarkable group of men, many of whom have undoubted right to be termed great men. In Lieut.-Col. Macleod we mention a pioneer administrator of the type peculiar to the Canadian North-West; the old type of sporting man—fearless, just, and a little bohemian. But there were others with equal or superior claims to fame. Governor Sir Adams Archibald, though capable occasionally of errors in judgment, did great deeds among the Indians; as did the various Commissioners of the Police, Sir George French, Lieut.-Col. A. G. Irvine, Lawrence Herchmer and later, A. Bower Perry; Assistant Commissioner Walsh—who commanded the first contingent of the R.N.W.M.P. to reach the West from Toronto—and Lieut.-Colonels Fred White and James Walker were also distinguished members of the Corps in the early days. Superintendent Steele, a splendid policeman, and afterwards a distinguished soldier, left the force to take command of Strathcona's Horse during the South African War, where he greatly distinguished himself.

In a short chapter of this description it is very difficult, in fact it is impossible, to do justice to one of



In the old days the Indians hunted bison

the greatest law-enforcing systems known to the world. Also it is extraordinarily hard to have to omit mention of the existing heads of this wonderful organization—especially so of the distinguished man who for many years has been Commissioner of the force. This man has a record second to none in the history of these "Riders of the Plains"; his life's work, so full of achievement and so full of courage, stands as an example and an inspiration to the manhood and the boyhood of the country. But it is the rule in this book of "Great Men" that none other than those who have passed the Great Divide shall have place in its printed pages. And this is a very proper rule, and a very sane ruling. So, we must content ourselves, and say that all these men, these pioneers, are worthy of mention in any book of history. Specially are they worthy of admission to these pages, for of a surety each and every one of them has been a Great Man of Canada.